



PINEHURST PRIMARY SCHOOL

DISCEMUS UT SERVEMUS

SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY POLICIES

POLICY: Policy on Social Media for Employees and Learners

POLICY REF: 14/06/2016

1 Policy purpose

Social media and general internet use is a valuable part of our society, and it is up to each individual in the school community to make best use of social media to promote the school's excellence. The purpose of the School Social Media Policy for Employees and learners is to establish rules and provide guidance for employees and guests and learners (collectively known as "users") on the use of social media; to establish a culture of transparency, trust and integrity in social media activities; and to encourage the integration of social media into our teaching and learning environments.

- 1.1 Pinehurst Primary School recognises the value of teaching enquiry, investigation and innovation using new technology tools to enhance the learning experience.
- 1.2 The school also recognises and accepts its authority and responsibility to protect minors from inappropriate content; and its obligation to teach responsible and safe use of the new technologies, as well as the importance of online social media networks as communication and e-learning tool.
- 1.3 In line with these values and responsibilities, the school will exercise its right to limit public access to various aspects of the social media within its own social media environment
- 1.4 With a view to implementing the school's aims and responsibilities, and responding to new technologies, this policy addresses employees' use of publicly available social media networks, including the following: personal websites, web logs (blogs), wikis, social networks, online forums, virtual worlds and any other social media.

2 Definitions

The following meanings are ascribed to technical terms within the context of this policy:

- 2.1 **Avatar** means: an icon or figure representing a particular person in a computer game, Internet forum, etc.
- 2.2 **Blogs** means: the blogs or journals where authors and users can post a textual, audio and video content, and where some permit others to post comments on their blogs.
- 2.3 **Guests** means: people using the school's social media space and includes, but is not limited to, visitors, workshop attendees, volunteers, adult education staff and learners, governing body members, Independent contractors, vendors and school consultants.
- 2.4 **Media sharing** means: using websites where users post and share videos, audio files and/or photos as well as tag them to enable searchability. (Examples include YouTube, Flickr, Picasa and Google Video.)
- 2.5 **Microblogs** means: websites and spaces that allow users to post short blog entries. (for example, Twitter, Facebook and Foursquare).
- 2.6 **Public social media networks** means: websites, web logs (blogs), wikis, social networks, online forums, virtual worlds and any other social media generally available to the public or consumers, and which do not fall within the school's electronic technologies network (e.g. MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube, Edmodo, Yammer.)
- 2.7 **School-approved password-protected social media tools** means: those that fall within the school's electronic technologies network or which the school has approved for educational use.
- 2.8 **Social media use** means: communication, collaborative sharing, and reaching out to learners, employees and guests for educational purposes, using school-provided websites, platforms, resources or documents. Examples include, but are not limited to, Google Apps, Ning, Teacher Tube, Moodle and Gaggle.
- 2.9 **Social networks** means: websites where users can create customised profiles and form connections with other users based on shared characteristics and interests.

- 2.10 *Users means:* learners, employees, guests and others who make use of the school's networks, systems, computers and devices, or any other such devices brought onto the school premises, for carrying out their social media activities
- 2.11 *Virtual world means:* web or software-based platforms that allow users to create avatars or representations of themselves, and through these avatars to meet, socialise and contact with other users. (Second life is an example of a virtual world.)
- 2.12 *Wikis means:* resources or documents edited collaboratively by a community of users with varying levels of editorial control by the website publisher. (Wikipedia is the best known example.)

3 **Social network provisioning and usage**

- 3.1 In striving to meet its aims and obligations in terms of media and technology involvement, the school provides password-protected social media tools and school-approved technologies for e-learning and encourages the use of school tools for collaboration by employees.
- 3.2 The above notwithstanding, public social media networks outside of those approved by the school may not be used for classroom instruction or school-sponsored activities without the prior authorisation of principal or his/her delegate, and parental consent for learner participation on social networks.

4 **The school's rights and authority**

- 4.1 The principal and or his/her delegate are granted authority through this policy to create rules, administrative and other regulations and protocols for the carrying out of the purpose of this policy.
- 4.2 Within the social media context, users are required to comply fully with this policy and its accompanying administrative regulations and all other relevant school policies, regulations, rules, procedures, social media terms of use and other legal documents, as well as local, provincial and national laws concerning social media.
- 4.3 All cyber actions by users attached to the school in any way must be conducted in accordance with the law, assist in the protection of the school's resources, ensure compliance with this policy and its administrative regulations, as well as other school policies, regulations, rules and procedures, social media and Internet service providers terms, and local, provincial and national laws.
- 4.4 The school has a right, but not a duty, to inspect, review or retain any electronic communication created, sent, displayed, received or stored on or over the school's electronics systems; and to monitor, record, check, track, log, access or otherwise inspect the content of its systems.
- 4.5 In addition, and in accord with the law, the school has the right, but not a duty, to inspect, review or retain any electronic communications created, sent, displayed, received or stored on users' personal computers, electronic devices, networks, internet or electronic communication systems; and also in data-bases, files, software, and media that contain school information and data.
- 4.6 Also, in accordance with the law, the school has the right, but not the duty, to inspect, review, or retain electronic communications created, sent, displayed, received or stored on another entity's computer or electronic device when users bring and use such other entities' computers or electronic devices to a school location, function or event, or connect it to the school network and/or systems, or any system that contains school programs, or school data or information.
- 4.7 The above applies no matter where the usage occurs, and whether the equipment has been brought on to school property, to school events, or is connected to the school network, or is used as or with mobile transmitting equipment or telecommunications facilities, and whether in protected or unprotected areas or environments, directly from home, or indirectly through another social media or Internet service provider, as well is by any other means.
- 4.8 The school will cooperate to the extent legally required of it with social media sites, internet service providers, local, provincial and state officials in investigations or with other legal requests, whether the actions be criminal or civil.
- 4.9 If any user believes that there is a conflict in the requirements with which he or she is obligated to comply, the matter must be brought to the attention of a supervisor, principal who will follow through with the matter.
- 4.10 The school reserves the right to have a Pinehurst Primary School Facebook page.
 - 4.10.1 An e-mail address will be set up for parents and staff to send photos and articles to publish on the schools social media site.
 - 4.10.2 This will be managed by designated persons who will have password-protected access to the e-mail address and social media site.
 - 4.10.3 The content displayed on this site will be limited to school events, achievements of pupils, PTA organised activities, School Social Outreach Initiatives , Inspirational articles relating to education and parenting and staff news.
 - 4.10.4 Any staff news will only be published on the site if it is sent to the e-mail address set up for this purpose by the staff member concerned.

- 4.10.5 Any photos of staff and children must be related to the event being reported on. Permission to use photos of children will be obtained through a general request annually that any parent not prepared to have their child displayed on the schools social media site should advise the school.

5 School expectations of its employees

- 5.1 It is the responsibility of all users to carefully consider their behaviour and what they place online when. This policy suggests that good judgement and common sense prevail when sending messages or posting content online.
- 5.2 When employees choose to engage with, or join the school's learners, families or fellow employees in a social media context that exists outside of those approved by the school, they are expected to maintain their professionalism as school employees and to accept responsibility for addressing inappropriate behaviour or activity on these networks.
- 5.3 Users should have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send, receive or display on or over the schools various electronic systems, and the schools authorised third-party systems, including their personal files or any of the use of these systems.
- 5.4 All employees and learners are expected to serve as positive ambassadors for the school and must be respectful and professional in all communications (whether by word, image or other means).
- 5.5 Users may not coerce others into providing passwords, login details or other security access information to them so that they may access social media or locations that they have no authorisation to access.
- 5.6 The school reserves the right to access, view, record, check, receive, monitor, track, log, store or otherwise inspect and utilise any or all of its own systems, as well as authorised third-party systems, and to monitor and allocate file server space.
- 5.7 Users using the school's systems or third-party systems to transmit or receive communications and information shall be deemed to have consented to having the content of any such communication accessed, viewed, had recorded, checked, received, monitored, tracked, long, stored or otherwise inspect it all utilised by the school, and to monitor and allocate file server space.
- 5.8 Passwords and message delete functions do not restrict the school's ability or rights to access such communications or information.
- 5.9 Anything posted on an employee's website or web blog, or any Internet content for which the such person is responsible, will be subject to all school policies, rules, regulations and guidelines.
- 5.10 The school is entitled to view and monitor an employee's website or web blog at any time without consent or previous approval.
- 5.11 Where applicable, employees may be asked to disclose to the school the existence of and to provide access to, such employee's website or web blog or other personal social media network as part of an employment selection, promotion or disciplinary process.

6 Inappropriate usage

- 6.1 Users shall not use obscene, profane or vulgar language on any social media network, nor engage in communication or conduct that is racist, harassing, threatening, bullying, libellous or defamatory; or that discusses or encourages any illegal activity or the inappropriate use of alcohol, illegal drugs, improper sexual behaviour, sexual harassment or bullying.
- 6.2 Users may not use their school e-mail addresses for communications on public social media networks that have not been approved by the school.
- 6.3 Users must make it clear that any views expressed are their own, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the school.
- 6.4 Users may not act as a spokesperson for the school, or post comments as a representative of the school, except when authorised to do so by the principal or the principal's delegate.
- 6.5 Users may not disclose information on any social media network that is confidential or proprietary to the school, its learners or employees, or that is protected by data privacy laws.
- 6.6 Users may not use or post the school's logo on any social media network without permission from the principal or his/her delegate.
- 6.7 Employees may not post images of co-workers on any social media network, without the permission of such co-worker.
- 6.8 Employees may not post images of learners on any social media network without written parental consent, except for images taken in the public arena, such as at sporting events or public performances.
- 6.9 Employees may not post any non-public images of the school premises and property, including floor plans.

6.10 Because other users of social media networks may view the employee as a representative of the school, the school requires/expects employees to observe the following rules when referring to the school, its learners, programs, activities, employees, volunteers or communities on any social media networks:

6.10.1 An employee's use of any social media network and an employee's postings, displays or communications on any social media network must comply with all regulations and laws, and any applicable school or departmental policies.

6.10.2 Users are responsible for their own behaviour when communicating on social media, including being held accountable for the content of the communications that they post, state or on-send on social media locations.

6.10.3 Users should note that information that they place in the social media, even though it may be designated as private, can be accessed for litigation purposes, distributed by friends and can be accessed in various other legal ways.

6.10.4 Inappropriate communications may not be posted on social media, including but not limited to: confidential, personally identifiable or sensitive school information about learners, employees and guests; child pornography sexually exploitative material, bullying/cyber bullying or inappropriate commercialisation of childhood experiences; defamatory or discriminatory statements or images; infringed-upon intellectual property, such as copyright ownership; terroristic threats; and illegal items or activities.

7 Interaction with social media groups

7.1 The school recognises that learner groups or members of the public may create social media platforms representing learners or groups within the school.

7.2 When employees, including coaches and consultants, choose to join in or engage with these social networking groups, they do so as an employee of the school.

7.3 Employees have a responsibility for maintaining appropriate employee-learner relationships at all times, and also for addressing inappropriate behaviour or activity on social media networks. This includes acting to protect the safety minors online.

7.4 Employees who participate in social media networks may include information about their work at school as part of their personal profile, as it would relate to a typical social conversation. This may include:

7.4.1 work information included in a personal profile, but such information must include the job title and job duties.

7.4.2 Status updates regarding the employee's own job promotion.


7.4.3 Personal participation in school-sponsored events, including volunteer activities.

8 Consequences of any breach of this policy

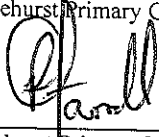
8.1 This policy and its various rules, regulations or guidelines, incorporate all other relevant school policies, such as, but not limited to, learner and employee discipline policies, codes of conduct, acceptable use policies, copyright and anti-discrimination policies.

8.2 General rules for behaviour, ethics and communications apply when using social networking systems and information, in addition to the stipulations of this policy and the school's various regulations.

8.3 Users must be aware that violations of this policy or other rules or guidelines on social media may result in loss of access and a variety of other disciplinary actions, including, but not limited to, warnings, usage restrictions, loss of privileges, position reassignment, oral or written reprimands, suspension, dismissal, breach of contract penalties provided for in statutes, regulations or other laws, as well as legal proceedings on a case-by-case basis.

Signed: 
Chairman Pinehurst Primary Governing Body

Date: 2016/06/15

Signed: 
Principal Pinehurst Primary School

Date: 2016|06|15



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SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY POLICIES - ADDENDUM TO SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY: GUIDELINES TO WHATSAPP USE

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The purpose to this addendum is to provide guidelines for the appropriate use of WhatsApp by educators, non-educators, parents/guardians and learners over the age of 13 years. (In terms of the current WhatsApp policy only those over 13 years of age may use the app).

This addendum applies to all staff, parents/guardians of learners and all learners at the school and to social media, specifically WhatsApp, used relation to/association with the school.

The school recognises that WhatsApp, as a form of social media, is a valuable form of communication, but must be used responsibly. If not used responsibly, social media poses certain risks. The school has a duty to protect itself, and other individuals associated with the school, against these risks. This addendum has therefore been created to ensure the appropriate use of specifically WhatsApp, reducing the risks to individuals associated with the school and the school's reputation.

The use of WhatsApp groups does not replace the use of D6 Communicator or email-communication sent by the school and it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to check these platforms regularly.

2. DEFINITIONS

"Social media" means a collection of interactive online platforms and tools that individuals, groups and organisations use to share content, profiles, opinions, insights, experiences, perspectives and media. It allows for the creating and exchange or user-generated content.

"Social Media Platforms" means web-based services that allows for individuals to:

- Build a public or semi-public profile;
- Share contacts or friends with other users; and
- View their lists of contacts or friends and those made by others within the system (the nature of these contacts or friends may vary from site to site).

These platforms include but are not limited to: blogs, forums and platforms such as Facebook, Google, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Discord, Signal, Telegram, Twitch, Reddit, TikTok, WhatsApp, YouTube, Gaming platforms (including games on Xbox and PlayStation etc.) and any other forms of communication now and in the future classified or generally regarded as social media platforms.



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3. GUIDELINES

The WhatsApp groups are for school related business only. For any WhatsApp groups used for school purposes, you must adhere to the school WhatsApp guidelines below:

- a) All members of a school WhatsApp group must adhere to the guidelines contained within this addendum and by joining the group, members affirm that they have read and understood these guidelines.
- b) Only authorised persons may set up and administer/manage school WhatsApp groups.
- c) Parents/guardians will be invited by the authorised person to be part of the group.
- d) Group members not adhering to group guidelines will be removed by the group administrator, if necessary.
- e) The Principal authorises the Class Teacher or his/her delegate to set up a Class-specific WhatsApp group. (Usually, the Class Teacher would delegate this task to the Class Representative (Class Rep) who will set up and manage the group).
- f) Partaking in the group is voluntary and group members may opt-out at any time. The Class Teacher may choose to be on the group or not.
- g) No "out of hours" use of the groups. The "hours" of all school WhatsApp Groups are from 7am - 9pm. Communications must only be sent between these times. These groups may only be used outside of these hours for emergencies.
- h) There must be no unrelated business, current affairs or social issues discussed on these groups. Advertising, political endorsement, memes, jokes, etc. are prohibited on these groups.
- i) The school WhatsApp groups are not places for the discussion of gripes with the school, teachers, staff, parents, guardians or learners. Issues must be raised through the appropriate channels, not on any form of social media.
- j) Only reply to the message if necessary. If a message does not require a response, please do not respond. You do not need to acknowledge receipt of posts or thank the sender, unless specifically requested to do so.
- k) Communications on a WhatsApp group are for the purpose intended when the member joined, and only for those who are members of the group. Therefore, do not forward any messages posted on the group to any other person or group without the administrator's permission.
- l) Our staff do also appreciate a break, so please do not expect communication from them on WhatsApp groups outside of school hours, unless it is an emergency. In the case of an emergency, it would be best to make direct contact with the staff member via a phone call and not via a group message.
- m) Keep messages as short as possible.
- n) Limit the use of emojis that are commonly understood. Some emojis may be misunderstood.
- o) Avoid sending videos or files that are large as these consume phone memory and data.



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- p) Respect silent observers. It is not compulsory for members to participate in group discussions.
- q) One-on-one discussions is best to be conducted outside the group.
- r) Members are not allowed to change the group name or icon - only the administrator may.
- s) You can only use the school logo, if you have written permission from the Principal or his delegate.
- t) You may not create social media accounts, specifically WhatsApp groups, that appear to belong to the school, without specific permission from the Principal or his delegate.
- u) In the eyes of the law anything said on the WhatsApp group is “published” content, and the person who posted it as well as everyone in the group is responsible for it. A member who objects to the posting must register the objection and distance him/herself from it by stating that he/she does not condone the content posted. The objector/s can also leave the group immediately. A person who fails to act remains in the “chain of publication” and is as liable as the person who created the message.
- v) We remind our staff, parents/guardians and learners that in terms of using social media, one must not create, post, associate yourself with (i.e. by being in the chain of publication for) or send on any content that includes the following:
 - Content that may be used for unlawful purposes, or that aims to assist with unlawful conduct;
 - Content that includes any threats of violence or harm of any type;
 - Content that amounts to hate speech i.e., speech that discriminates on prohibited grounds such as gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation;
 - Content that is obscene, violent or pornographic;
 - Content containing communications or images which may be defamatory (i.e. say something bad about someone/an organisation) or violate the rights of another party;
 - Content containing offensive, abusive, harassing or harmful communications;
 - Content that is untrue or that is designed to mislead other people;
 - Content that discloses private information about the school, our learners or our staff;
 - Content that is detrimental to the school, or any of its staff, learners or parents;
 - Content that infringes the intellectual property rights of another party.
- w) Should you become aware of any incidences of bullying, harassment, sexting or other inappropriate communications concerning or involving any learner or other individual associated with our school, this needs to be reported to a member of staff immediately.
- x) Personal details of school staff, parents/guardians and learners may not be disclosed to other parties, unless express permission has been given by the relevant party.
- y) Staff, parents/guardians and learners should take note that the school may from time to time share photos on social media sites that were taken during official school activities. People may then be named/“tagged”, but will never be tagged by a member of the school staff. Users of social media sites are advised to check their security settings if they prefer to review postings in which they were “tagged”.
- z) English is the agreed language to be used on all school WhatsApp groups.



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4. POPI ACT

The school respects the individual privacy of educators, non-educators, parents/guardians and learners. Therefore, it is worthwhile to read this addendum in conjunction with the Protection of Personal Information Act. (PoPI Act – ACT no. 4 of 2013) as legislated by government. The purpose of the PoPI Act is to ensure that all South African institutions and individuals conduct themselves in a responsible manner when collecting, processing, storing and sharing another entity's personal information by holding them accountable, should they abuse or compromise your personal information in any way.

5. AMENDMENTS TO ADDENDUM

The School Management Team and Governing Body may from time to time amend, supplement, modify or alter this addendum.

SIGNED:  _____

Steven Finegan
School Governing Body Chairperson

Date: 31 January 2022

SIGNED:  _____

BRENDAN CARROLL
Principal

Date: 31 JANUARY 2022