

Electronic & Social Media Policy

This is a brief guide to make sure you do not put yourself in compromising positions via online communication.

- Always maintain a formal, courteous, and professional tone in communicating with pupils and ensure that professional boundaries are maintained.
- Only use official channels of communication e.g., work email addresses and be aware of and comply with employer's policies and guidance.
- Do not exchange private texts, phone numbers, personal e-mail addresses or photos of a personal nature with pupils.
- Firmly decline student-initiated "friend" requests from pupils and do not instigate any yourself. Use your own discretion when dealing with "friend" requests from parents. It is acceptable to decline these invitations and remind parents of more formal channels through which they can discuss their child's education.
- Operate online in a way in which would not call into question your position as a professional.
- Realise that pupils will naturally be curious about your personal life outside school and may try to find out more about you.
- Manage your privacy settings and keep them under review. These are particularly important with regards to photos. Remember that no privacy mechanism is 100% guaranteed.
- Ensure your settings prohibit others from tagging you in any photos or updates without your permission - you can ask others to remove any undesirable content related to you.
- Audit and re-evaluate the information about you and who has access to it.
- Be aware that potential employers may try and view your online social media profiles.
- Consider that conversations held online may not be private. Be aware of who may have access to what you post.
- Assume that information you post can be accessed and altered.
- Do not discuss pupils, colleagues, parents, or carers online or criticise your employer or others within the school community.
- Respect pupil privacy and confidentiality at all times.
- Use strong passwords and change them regularly. Protect your mobile phone/smart phone/tablet computer with a PIN, especially when in school, to protect access to its content and potential misuse.
- Bring the matter to the attention of your employer, using the proper procedures, if you are the victim of cyber bullying or are uncomfortable with comments, photos or posts made by pupils about you.