

## **Social Media Policy**

### **1 Purpose**

The Sheffield Private School recognises the rights of students, staff, and employees who want to participate in online social networking. These guidelines are designed to create an atmosphere of goodwill, honesty, and individual accountability. The Sheffield Private School students and staff should always keep in mind that information produced, shared, and retrieved by them is a reflection on the school community and is subject to the school's policies. When accessing, creating, or contributing to any blogs, wikis, podcasts, or other social media for classroom or for personal use, the school expects that all students and staff keep these guidelines in mind. Failure to meet or follow these guidelines may result in disciplinary action.

### **2 Scope**

This policy and guidelines are for all TSPS staff, students and parents.

### **3 Social Media Guidelines for Students**

The Sheffield Private School expects all students to set and maintain high ethical standards in their use of social networking. Since social media reaches audiences far beyond the school community, students must use social sites responsibly and be accountable for their actions. If a student sees anything of concern on a fellow student's social networking page or account, they should immediately contact their teacher, the Principal or another adult within The Sheffield Private School community.

1. In the online environment, students must follow The Sheffield Private School Code of Conduct and conduct themselves online as they would in school.
2. "Think before you post": students are asked to use discretion when posting to the Internet.
3. The Sheffield Private School reserves the right to request school-related images or content posted without permission to be removed from the Internet.
4. Students must not misrepresent themselves by using someone else's identity.
5. Social media venues are public and information can be shared beyond students' control. Students should be conscious of what they post online as it will leave a long-lasting impression on many different audiences.
6. Students should not post or link anything (photos, videos, web pages, audio files, forums, groups, fan pages, etc.) to the social networking sites that they would not want friends, peers, parents, teachers, university admissions officers or future employers to access.

7. When responding to others, students should remember to be respectful and avoid comments that may be hurtful. Under no circumstances should a student use profane, obscene, or threatening language.
8. Students should use privacy settings to control access to their own web pages, profiles, posts, blogs, wikis, podcasts, digital media, forums, groups, fan pages, etc.
9. Online stalkers and identity thieves are a real threat. Never share personal information, including, but not limited to, phone numbers, addresses, birthdates, and pictures with parties you do not know or on unsecure sites.
10. Students should keep their passwords secure and never share passwords with others. If someone tampers with a student's blog, email, or social networking account without their knowledge, the student who owns the account may be held accountable.
11. Cyberbullying is considered an act of harassment.
12. Use of The Sheffield Private School logos or images on personal social networking sites is prohibited. If any student wishes to promote a specific school activity or event, this may be done only by means of a link to the official The Sheffield Private School Facebook, Instagram, Twitter account, or YouTube channel.

## **2 Parent Social Media Guidelines**

Social media is a powerful tool that opens up communication between students, parents, and teachers. This kind of communication and collaboration can have a huge impact on learning. The Sheffield Private School encourages parents to view and participate by adding comments to TSPS social media sites when appropriate.

Parents are required to adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Parents should expect communication from teachers prior to their child's involvement in any project using online social media applications, i.e., Facebook, blogs, wikis, podcast, etc.
2. As part of the admission process, parents will need to sign a Media Consent form for their child/ren to allow the school to use pictures, videos etc. for social media activities.
3. Parents will not attempt to destroy or harm any information online.
4. Parents will not use school or classroom social media sites for any illegal activity, including violation of data protection laws.
5. Parents are encouraged to read and/or participate in social media.
6. Parents should not distribute any information that might be deemed personal about The Sheffield Private School.
7. Parents should not upload or include any information that does not also meet the Student Guidelines.

## **3 Social Media Guidelines for Staff**

The Sheffield Private School employees are personally responsible for the content they publish online. Staff must be mindful that what they publish will be public for a long time.

1. Online behaviour should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that staff are expected to use face-to-face.

2. When posting to a blog or any social media site, staff must ensure that they say the information is representative of their views and opinions and not necessarily the views and opinions of The Sheffield Private School.
3. Remember that blogs, wikis and podcasts are an extension of the classroom. What is inappropriate in the classroom should be deemed inappropriate online.
4. The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the digital world. By virtue of identifying as an employee online, staff are now connected to colleagues, students, parents and the school community. Content associated with any member of staff must be consistent with work at school.
5. When contributing online do not post confidential student information.

### **3.2 Disclaimers**

The Sheffield Private School employees must include disclaimers within their personal blogs that the views are their own and do not reflect on their employer. For example, "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent The Sheffield Private School's positions, strategies, opinions, or policies."

Classroom blogs do not require a disclaimer, but teachers are encouraged to moderate content contributed by students.

### **3.2 Profiles and Identity**

All staff must remember their association and responsibility with The Sheffield Private School in online social environments. If staff identify themselves as an employee of The Sheffield Private School, they must ensure profiles and related content are consistent with how staff would wish to present themselves with colleagues, parents, and students.

No last names, school names, addresses or phone numbers should appear on Facebook, Insta, blogs or wikis.

Staff must be cautious how they setup profiles, bios, avatars, etc. When uploading digital pictures or avatars that represent themselves, school appropriate images must be selected. Staff must not use protected/copyright images.

### **3.3 Personal Use of Social Media such as Facebook, Myspace and Twitter**

The Sheffield Private School employees are personally responsible for all comments/information they publish online.

1. Staff should be aware that their online behaviour should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that should be used face-to-face, and be in accordance with the highest professional standards.
2. Staff should be aware that posting comments, having online conversations etc. on social media sites, even with the strictest privacy settings, should be within the bounds of professional discretion. Comments expressed via social networking pages under the impression of a 'private conversation' may still end up being shared into a more public domain, even with privacy settings on maximum.
3. Comments related to the school should always meet the highest standards of professional discretion. When posting, even on the strictest settings, staff should act on the assumption that all postings are in the public domain.

4. Before posting photographs and videos, permission should be sought from the subject where possible. This is especially the case where photographs of professional colleagues are concerned.
5. Before posting personal photographs, thought should be given as to whether the images reflect on individual professionalism.
6. Photographs relating to alcohol or tobacco use may be deemed inappropriate. If it would seem inappropriate to put a certain photograph on the wall - is it really correct to put it online?
7. Microblogging (Twitter etc.) comments made using such media are not protected by privacy settings. Employees should be aware of the public and widespread nature of such media and again refrain from any comment that could be deemed unprofessional.

### **3.4 Social Bookmarking**

1. Be aware that others can view the sites that are bookmarked by an individual.
2. Be aware of words used to tag or describe the bookmark.
3. Be aware of URL shortening services. Verify the landing site to which they point before submitting a link as a bookmark. It would be best to utilise the original URL if not constrained by the number of characters as in microblogs i.e. Twitter
4. Always attempt to link directly to a page or resource if possible as there is no control as to what appears on landing pages in the future.

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