



TOM NEWBY SCHOOL

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SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY DOCUMENT: 2023

The purpose of a social media policy is to protect learners, staff and parents from any issues that can arise as a result of having a presence on-line. Examples: Malicious or defamatory statements, threats and abuse, disputes & cyber-bullying.

Tom Newby School recognises that technology and social media are changing the way in which individuals and organisations communicate.

The school encourages ethical and responsible engagement on all social media platforms including social networking sites and applications, emails, blogs, message boards, chat rooms, on-line forums, and any other sites and services that allow users to share information with others in an interactive manner.

A. STAFF, PARENTS AND PUPILS

It is the responsibility of all staff, parents and pupils to:

- a. Understand the advantages and the potential risks of social media.
- b. Be aware that posts may be in the public domain for a long time.
- c. Regularly review the content of social media postings and report any information that could reflect negatively on the school, its learners, staff, parents or trustees (e.g. inappropriate comments made in response to postings).
- d. Behave in a manner which is representative of Tom Newby School's policies.
- e. Not engage in on-line communication activities which could bring the school into disrepute.
- f. Refrain from impersonating third parties or acting in any manner that may mislead, confuse or deceive others.
- g. Refrain from engaging in any communication which amounts to unlawful harassment or discrimination.

- h. Refrain from disclosing personal details of learners, staff, parents and contracted service providers. However, all parties should take note that the school may from time to time share photos taken during official school activities on social media sites. Users of these social media sites are advised to check their security settings if they prefer to review postings in which they were 'tagged'. Learners, staff and parents are advised to block other users who they do not know or do not want to be associated with, from accessing their profiles.
- i. Tom Newby School does not accept any responsibility or liability for weak security settings on the social media profile of any person associated with the school.

B. SPECIFIC TO STAFF

It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- a. Decline friend requests from current pupils, or ex-pupils under the age of 13 except in the case of a site specifically set up for professional purposes.
- b. Notify the parents if a child sends a friend request.
- c. Refrain from corresponding with parents via social media. It is preferable to use a school email address, class dojo or the school diary.
- d. Only post things that they would be happy to be attributed to them as a teaching professional.
- e. Use the tightest privacy settings possible.
- f. Engage in social media communication on behalf of the school only when authorised* by the Principal to do so on behalf of the school.
- g. Notify the principal of any potential online conflicts.

*Only authorised persons may comment on any aspect of the school and/or any matter in which the school is involved. When making such comment, the authorised person must identify him/herself.

An authorised person who engages in social media communication on behalf of the school must ensure that he/she is familiar with the school's view on specific issues, and should not express views that are inconsistent with those set out by the school. If an authorised person is not familiar with or is unsure of the school's position on any particular issue, he/she should seek clarity from the Principal.

C. SPECIFIC TO PARENTS

It is the responsibility of all parents to:

- a. Raise queries, concerns and complaints directly with the school rather than posting them on social media – whether on their own pages, in closed groups (e.g. groups set up for school parents to communicate with each other) or on the school's pages.
- b. Refrain from posting anything malicious about the school or any member of the school community.
- c. When learners conduct themselves inappropriately without being identified as connected with the school, accept their parental roles in managing the private activities of their children. Parents should not expect the school to monitor private and out-of school activities of pupils of the school. However, the school might choose to intervene if such action is in the best interests of the child.

D. SPECIFIC TO LEARNERS

It is the responsibility of all learners to:

- a. Refrain from joining any social networking sites if they are below the permitted age (13 for most sites including Facebook and Instagram).
- b. Be aware of how to report abuse and inappropriate content.
- c. Refrain from accessing social media on school devices, or on their own devices while at school (unless permitted to do so by an authorised staff member).
- d. Refrain from making inappropriate comments (including in private messages) about the school, teachers or other learners.
- e. Report instances where contraventions of this policy become known to them.



E. GENERAL

- a. Tom Newby School reserves the right to investigate any allegations which contravene the School's policies and /or involve student safety.
- b. Confidentiality Waiver: Students utilising devices that belong to Tom Newby School or their personal devices need to know that, the School has the right to search the device without consent if there are suspicions that it may contain illicit information or reference something to which places a student or others at risk
- c. Tom Newby School can request that defamatory comments are removed from public spaces. If the parent refuses to do so, then the school may escalate the matter by reporting it to the social networking site, the local authority or seeking

legal advice. Comments that are threatening, abusive, racist, sexist or that could be seen as a hate crime can be reported to the police as online harassment.

- d. Tom Newby School may amend, supplement, modify or alter this policy from time to time.

Signatures

Recommended by: (Principal)	G Mynhardt	Signature:	
Date:	15 November 2022		
Approved by: (SGB Chairperson)	A Naicker	Signature:	
Date:	15 November 2022		
Verification by GDE: (District Director/IDSO)		Signature:	
Date of Verification:			
Certified by :		Signature:	
Date:			