ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS POLICY
STAFF

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents and policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (including Staff Code of Conduct)
- Behaviour Policy
- Taking, Storing and Using Names and Images of Pupils Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Departmental Instagram Guidelines
- Technology Acceptable Use Policy for Pupils
- Technology Acceptable Use Policy for Staff

All members of staff should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even on their private spaces, are still subject to copyright, The Data Protection Act 2018 and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation.

This policy relates to:

1. Personal use of Social Media
2. The Admission and Marketing Department's use of Social Media
3. Staff use of Social Media for Educational Purposes
4. Weekly F'Hill and the Website

The widespread availability and use of social media and online communication tools offers the opportunity to understand, engage, and communicate in exciting ways. It is important that we can use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly, but it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our legal responsibilities, our duties to our school, the community, and our reputation. For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support online engagement whilst providing a framework of good practice. The purpose of the policy is to:

- Safeguard all children
- Protect the School from legal risks
- Ensure that the reputation of the School, its staff and governors is protected
- Ensure that any users are able clearly to distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the School

Definition and Scope

Social media and online communication tools include, but are not limited to: blogs and podcasts, online discussion forums, collaborative spaces, media sharing services, 'microblogging' applications, website platforms and online gaming environments. Examples include but are not limited to X, Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, LinkedIn, Vimeo, TikTok, Mumsnet, YouTube, Flickr, Xbox Live, Blogger,

SnapChat, WhatsApp, Tumblr, Discord, Sway, BeReal and comment streams on public websites such as newspaper sites.

Many of the principles of this policy also apply to other types of online presence such as virtual worlds.

1. **Personal Use of Social Media**

   Staff should:

   - Keep their personal and professional/school lives separate. They should not put themselves in a position where there is a conflict between the School and their personal interests
   - Demonstrate proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of Farnborough Hill
   - Ensure that they always show tolerance of and respect for the rights of others. This includes actively supporting fundamental British values – democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
   - In addition, no member of staff should discriminate against pupils because of any protected characteristics, including disability, race, religion and belief, gender or sexuality
   - Ensure that messages communicated should be consistent with the ethos of the School and should not marginalise any communities, groups or individuals
   - Ensure that messages communicated do not seek to glorify criminal activity or violent extremism, or seek to radicalise pupils through extreme or narrow views of faith, religion, culture or other ideologies
   - Consider the reputation of the School in any posts or comments relating to the School on any social media accounts

   Staff should not:

   - Use a School email address for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media
   - Give their social media details to pupils, nor should they communicate with them by any form of social media
   - Become 'friends' with, 'follow' or make direct connections on any social media sites with present pupils. This also applies to ex pupils until they are 18 and have finished secondary education.
     - Where a social media link exists between school staff and pupils before they become employed/volunteer at the School, for example if they act as a sports coach to a pupil, we would expect staff to cease any of these social media links when they join the school
   - Engage in activities involving social media which might bring Farnborough Hill into disrepute
   - Represent their personal views as those of Farnborough Hill on any social media
   - Discuss personal information relating to pupils, Farnborough Hill or the wider community on any social media
   - Use social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, colleagues, other professionals, other organisations or Farnborough Hill
   - Engage in any illegal activities
   - Give out, or publish, personal details relating to any member of the School community without permission

   In addition:

   - Any communication received from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the Head of Year, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead being copied in

- If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media, these must immediately be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Staff must maintain the securest settings on any personal social media sites, so that pupils, parents, former pupils and others cannot see any personal information
- Staff must not refer to individual matters related to the School and members of its community on any social media accounts
- The School accepts that some sites may be used for professional purposes to highlight a personal profile with summarised details, eg LinkedIn. The School would advise that care is taken to maintain an up to date profile and a high level of presentation on such sites if Farnborough Hill is listed. If connecting with the School on LinkedIn, staff should connect with 'Farnborough Hill' and not 'Farnborough Hill School'
- Staff who run blogging/microblogging sites which have a professional and/or educational status are advised to seek guidance and advice from the SLT, regarding prudence and endorsement of views if there is any link referencing Farnborough Hill
- Where friendships exist between school staff and parents before they become Farnborough Hill parents, ie before their daughters attend the School, we would not expect these friendships to change, but staff would need to be mindful of comments that they make in relation to the School. It might also be prudent to review photos where they have been tagged with a member of staff's name

We recognise that staff may work long hours and occasionally may desire to use social media for personal activities at the office or by means of our computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems (including via smartphones and tablets). We authorise such occasional use [provided use is minimal and takes place substantially out of normal working hours (ie during your lunch break or before or after work) and] so long as it does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content, does not interfere with your employment responsibilities or productivity and is in accordance with this Policy and the ICT policy.

Circulating or posting commercial, personal, religious or political solicitations, or promotion of outside organisations unrelated to the School's business are also prohibited. Staff must ensure that their use of social media does not create any breaches of internet security and therefore must be careful to avoid any applications that might interrupt our IT systems. Excessive use of social media that interrupts staff productivity will be subject to a disciplinary procedure, consistent with this policy.

Permission to use the School's systems to access social media platforms for personal use may be withdrawn at any time at the School's discretion.

The monitoring of social media

Staff should be aware that, as per the Technology Acceptable Use Policy for Staff, Farnborough Hill filters, monitors and records all ICT usage and activity both in school and on school cloud-based software. Any such monitoring will be for legitimate business purposes which include:

- Ascertaining and demonstrating that our rules and being complied with
- Demonstrating that expected standards are being met by those using the systems
- For the detection and investigation of unauthorised use of the systems (including where this is necessary to prevent or detect crime)

This might include, without limitation, the monitoring, interception, accessing, recording, disclosing, inspecting, reviewing, retrieving and printing of transactions, messages, communications, postings,

log-ins, recordings and other uses of the systems as well as keystroke capturing and other network monitoring technologies.

We may store copies of such data or communications for as long as is necessary for our legitimate business purposes in accordance with data protection law. We may delete such copies periodically or from time to time without notice when their retention is no longer necessary.

Do not use our IT resources and communications systems for any matter that you wish to be kept private or confidential from the School.

2. The Admission and Marketing Department's use of Social Media

The Admissions and Marketing Department use social media for the purposes for recruitment and retention.

- The content of any school-sanctioned social media site should be solely professional and should reflect well on the School
- Girls featured in published photographs or video may only be identified by first name and/or Year Group, No images of the girls on the 'photo not content' list should be published, unless with prior written permission from their parent
- Tone should be friendly, and informal but professional
- The Department should not engage with any direct messaging of pupils through social media
- Staff should ensure that their use of the School's logos and other branding material is consistent with the School's relevant policies and procedures and is approved by the Director of Admissions and Marketing and/or Marketing Manager
- Staff should ensure that all arrangements with any third party in relation to their use of social media (eg online advertising, search engine optimisation or other arrangements) are properly documented, notified and approved by the Director of Admissions and Marketing
- Care must be taken that any links to external sites from school social media accounts are appropriate and safe
- Any inappropriate comments on, or abuse of, school-sanctioned social media should immediately be removed and reported to a member of SLT
- Content for social media from staff is gratefully received, however they should ensure they have the permission of all involved in the creation of the content before sending it to the Admissions and Marketing Department for use. Anything received by the Admissions and Marketing Department will be assumed as being approved
- Staff should never promise that a piece of work or photograph will be posted on social media

3. Staff use of Social Media for Educational Purposes

There are many legitimate uses of social media within the curriculum and to support pupil learning. When using social media for school business or educational purposes, the following practices must be observed:

- The URL and identity of the site should be notified to the appropriate Head of Department or member of SLT before access is permitted for pupils
- Staff should set up a distinct and dedicated social media site or account for educational purposes. This should be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by that member of staff, and should be linked to an official school email account. However, social media accounts should not be set up by any department without prior agreement from the Director of Admissions and Marketing and departmental Instagram accounts will be created for you by the Marketing Department

- The content of any school-sanctioned social media site should be solely professional and should reflect well on the School
- Tone should be friendly and informal but professional
- Staff should ensure that all arrangements with any third party in relation to their use of social media (eg online advertising, search engine optimisation or other arrangements) are properly documented, notified and approved by the Director of Admissions and Marketing
- Staff should ensure that their use of the School's logos and other branding material is consistent with the School's relevant policies and procedures and is approved by the Director of Admissions and Marketing and/or Marketing Manager
- Staff may only identify girls featured in published photographs or video with first name and/or Year Group, No images of the girls on the 'photo not content' list should be published, unless with prior written permission from their parent
- No images or video of fellow teachers or lessons should be taken, without the express permission of the teacher(s) involved
- Care must be taken that any links to external sites from the account are appropriate and safe
- Any inappropriate comments on, or abuse of, school-sanctioned social media should immediately be removed and reported to a member of SLT
- Staff should not engage with any direct messaging of pupils through social media

Social media and the end of employment

If a member of staff's employment with the School should end, for whatever reason, any personal profiles on social networking sites should be immediately amended to reflect the fact that you are no longer employed or associated with the School.

All professional contacts that a member of staff has made through their course of employment with us belong to the School, regardless of whether or not the member of staff has made social media connections with them.

On the termination of employment for any reason, and when requested by the School at any time, staff will provide to their line manager any relevant passwords and other information to allow access to any social media site, page or account which has been used or set up for the purpose of furthering the School's business or facilitating the provision of its curriculum and will relinquish any authority they may have to manage or administer any such site, page or account.

4. **Weekly F'Hill and the Website**

Weekly F'Hill is the main means of news-style communication with parents. It is also sent to selected prospective parents. The website contains a news section which is populated with highlights from Weekly F'Hill and other stories.

- Staff should send all content for Weekly F'Hill by 2.00 pm on a Thursday
- Content should be written in keeping with the School's Brand Guidelines and be proof-read before sending to the editor
- The correctly spelt full names and Forms of girls should be supplied. These will appear in the version of Weekly F'Hill which is sent to current parents, but not that which is sent to prospects. First names and Year Groups will be used on the website
- Content for Weekly F'Hill and the website from staff is gratefully received, however they should ensure they have the permission of all involved in the creation of the content before sending it to the editors for use. Anything received by the editors will be assumed as having been approved
- Staff should never promise that a piece of work or photograph will be posted on Weekly F'Hill or the website. Items will be posted at the discretion of the editors

- No images of the girls on the 'photo not content' list should be published, unless with prior written permission from their parent

This policy is reviewed annually by the Director of Admissions and Marketing and the Headmistress.

The next review is due in August 2025.