READING SCHOOL

THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA
BY STUDENTS

Contents

Introduction

For the purposes of this document, *social media* is defined as interactive online media that allow parties to communicate instantly with one another or share information in a public forum. Examples *may* include websites such as Twitter, Facebook, Myspace and LinkedIn. Social media may also include blogs, video and image-sharing websites such as YouTube, Tumblr and Flickr.

Staff, both teaching and associate, who are responsible for monitoring the appropriate use of social media websites by students, within school and during school hours, should be aware that there are many, many more examples of social media. This is a constantly developing and rapidly changing area of communication. Students in our care, of all ages, should be made aware of and follow these guidelines in relation to any social media that they use, both in school and at home.

Scope

This policy applies to all students at Reading School, of all ages, and both day boys and Boarders. It is incumbent on all teachers, associate staff, governors and all who work on the school site, including volunteers, to ensure the students in their care are aware of, and adhere to, the guidelines contained within this document.

The policy sets out to:

- To make students more aware of the potential risks online

- To encourage them to monitor their own standards of behaviour whilst online, both in and out of school

- To offer a code of practice, relevant to their use of social media in an educational context, so that they may conduct their online activities in an appropriate and safe way

- To offer advice and provide structured support and make them feel safe whilst online

- To provide students with an awareness of potential risks so that unsafe activity and/or unacceptable behaviour is avoided, either in school or at home

and takes account of the variety of legislation appropriate to this area.

Policy

When discussing the use of social media by students at Reading School, the following should be noted:

- The use of Facebook, in school hours and in lessons, is blocked on all school owned equipment by our internet filter settings.

- The use of non-RS Twitter accounts, in school hours and in lessons, is not approved and is a behavioural issue rather than an IT issue.

- The use of wireless enabled hand held devices in school is not banned, in fact we are trialling the guest wireless network with some 6th Formers

- The use of 3G + 4G enabled hand held devices in school is not banned and their inappropriate use is a behavioural issue that should be logged.

Boarding has a separate policy for the Boarders in relation to internet access. The filtering system changes at the end of the school day to allow boarders access to social media sites at the request of the Headmaster and Housemasters.

Use of Social Media by Students in Reading School

Personal Capacity

Students should not access social media websites ***in a personal capacity*** from the school computers, laptops, tablets or other devices at any time.

They may use their own computers or other devices while they are in the school to access social media websites but only ***outside*** of their classroom lesson times. The accessing of social media in the classroom in a ***personal capacity,*** rather than as a structured part of a planned lesson, could be considered to interfere with the teaching and learning of the class will be considered a disciplinary matter.

Educational Context

However, the use of Social Media by students, of any age, ***in an educational context*** is acceptable. In fact, the innovative use of new technologies by students in the classroom, such as social media, is to be encouraged provided certain safeguards are taken.

When creating, configuring and using an online social media site with students in an educational context, the organising or "moderating" staff will have made those students aware of the setup settings, in particular the privacy settings. Any attempt by students, either as individuals or as a group, either in school or at home, to circumnavigate or amend or adjust these configurations will be considered a disciplinary matter.

Any pupil using *any* social media site *must*:

- act responsibly at all times when on the site
- be responsible for any content they add or upload
- inform at once the "moderator" of any inappropriate content found
- inform at once the "moderator" if they are contacted by someone they do not know
- inform at once the "moderator" if they are suspicious about something

Any pupil using *any* social media site must *not*:

- Bring the school into disrepute
- Breach confidentiality
- Breach copyrights of any kind
- Upload inappropriate material or content that refers to the school or any school staff
- Bully, harass or be discriminatory in any way
- Be defamatory or derogatory

Use of Social Media by Students Out of School

Reading School appreciates that students will make use of social media in *a personal capacity*. However, they must be aware that if they are recognised from their profile as being associated with the school then certain opinions expressed, content added or linked to, or images or movie clips uploaded could be considered as damaging the reputation of the school and may be *considered a disciplinary matter*.

Content added or uploaded in *a personal capacity* should follow the Reading School policy guidelines and not bring the school into disrepute, breach confidentiality, breach copyrights or bully, harass or discriminate in any way.

General Considerations (both in and out of School)

When using social media websites, in either a school based activity or in a personal capacity, students:

- Must never share log-in details or passwords, even with friends or siblings

- Should keep personal phone numbers private

- Should not give out their personal email addresses to any one they do not know

- Should restrict access on their personal social media sites and pages to groups of people they know and trust.

- Must maintain appropriate boundaries and manage personal information effectively so that it cannot be misused by third parties for "cyber bullying" or possibly identity theft.

- Should not invite their teachers or other school staff to be "friends" nor should they accept invitations to become a "friend" of any one they do not know – people online may not be who they say they are, be the age they say they are or even the gender they say they are.

- Should be made aware, when using social media websites, what impression their online presence may give to others. Sixth Formers in particular should take care. All activity on the web leaves an identifiable online footprint, an evidence trail, left behind either as a deliberate act or by association.

- Should, at all times, be made aware and given advice that their online activities can be easily tracked and that this may have a considerable impact on them, either now or in their future aspirations or career choices.

Approved by:	Governing Body
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Revised:	In accordance with legislation and/or every 2 years