

Social Media Policy

Date of Issue: September 2021

Date of Review: September 2022

1. Overview of Footsteps' Social Media Policy

- 1.1 Footsteps as an organisation recognises and embraces the numerous benefits and opportunities that social media offers. While students may engage, collaborate, and innovate through social media, they should also be aware that there are some associated risks, especially around issues of safeguarding, bullying and reputation.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is:
 - i. To encourage safe and appropriate use by students.
 - ii. To inform students and families of the age restrictions on setting up accounts.
 - iii. To reduce incidents of on-line bullying.
 - iv. To reduce incidents of on-line exploitation, identify the definition of social media & age restrictions: Social media is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. It allows people to share information, ideas and views.
- 1.3 The vast majority of popular platforms such as Facebook, linked in, snapchat, Tik Tok, Youtube, twitter etc are available for those **aged 13** and over.

2. Roles, responsibilities, and procedure

Students should:

- 2.1 Be aware of their online reputation and recognise that their online activity can be seen by others including parents, teachers, and other students.
- 2.2 Be aware that any inappropriate use of social media in school may result in disciplinary action and can lead to problems for themselves and others.
- 2.3 Be responsible for their words and actions in an online environment. They are therefore advised to consider whether any comment, photograph, or video that they are about to post on a social networking site is something that they want parents, teachers, and other students to read.
- 2.4 School is responsible for Informing students regarding the safe use of social media
- 2.5 Informing students of the standards of behaviour expected of them
- 2.6 Giving advice on the use of social media; students should be aware that content uploaded to social media is not private. Even if restricted to 'friends', there is still capacity for it to be re-posted or distributed beyond the intended recipients. Therefore, students using social media should only create accounts appropriate to their age conduct themselves with in a respectful manner.

Footsteps Students should not upload any content on to social media sites that:

1. is confidential to families, school, and themselves
2. amounts to bullying
3. amounts to unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation
4. contains lewd, sexually explicit, threatening or similarly inappropriate or offensive comments, images, or video clips
5. is defamatory or knowingly false
6. breaches copyright
7. is in any other way unlawful. Potential risks can include, but are not limited to
8. online bullying; grooming, exploitation, or stalking; exposure to inappropriate material or hateful language
9. encouraging violent behaviour, self-harm or risk taking. In order to mitigate these risks, the school promotes safety online
10. should not use social media in an attempt to locate or meet a child
11. messages, photos or information should comply with existing policies

Any content or online activity which raises a safeguarding concern must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead / Safeguarding Team in the school

Any online concerns should be reported as soon as identified as urgent steps may need to be taken to support the child.

With regard to personal safeguarding, any harassment or abuse received online while using school accounts should be reported.

Reporting, responding, and recording cyberbullying incidents.

Students should never engage with cyberbullying incidents.

If you discover a website containing inaccurate, inappropriate, or inflammatory written material relating to you, or images of you which have been taken and/or which are being used without your permission, you should immediately report this to the School Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

3. Breaches of this policy

- 3.1 Students suspected of committing a breach of this policy (or if complaints are received about unacceptable use of social networking that has potentially breached this policy) will be investigated in accordance with the school's bullying or disciplinary procedure. The student will be expected to cooperate with the school's investigation which may involve:
 - i. handing over relevant passwords and login details
 - ii. printing a copy or obtaining a screenshot of the alleged unacceptable content
- 3.2 The seriousness of the breach will be considered including the nature of the content, how long the content remained visible on the social media site, the potential for recirculation by others and the impact on the school/trust or the individuals concerned. Actions online can be in breach of school policies and policies may be treated as conduct issues in accordance with the disciplinary procedure. If the outcome of an investigation leads to disciplinary action, the consequences will be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate procedures. Where conduct

may be considered as possibly unlawful, the school will report the matter to the police and other external agencies.

3.3 Acceptable use of social networking must comply with UK law. In applying this policy, the school will adhere to its rights, responsibilities and duties in accordance with the following:

- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018
- The Human Rights Act 1998 • The Equality Act 2010
- The Defamation Act 2013

The internet is a fast-moving technology, and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media – the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium. When using social media, students should be aware of the potential impact on themselves and others, whether for school-related or personal use; whether during school hours or otherwise; or whether social media is accessed using school equipment or using personal devices.