



مدرسة الشارقة الأمريكية الدولية
Sharjah American International School

SHARJAH AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL – UMM AL QUWAIN

Social Media Policy and Guidelines- Staff

1. Introduction

We actively encourage the responsible use of social media. Responsible use of social media can be positive for learning and teaching. It can also be personally enjoyable and beneficial.

This policy will make clear what standards are expected of anyone who works for the school and uses social media as well as what actions may be taken when it is considered a member of staff may have breached this policy.

- 1.1 This policy applies to all staff use of social media, including:
 - 1.1.1 on behalf of the school.
 - 1.1.2 as part of their work directly with pupils.
 - 1.1.3 In their wider professional lives; and
 - 1.1.4 In their personal lives.
- 1.2 There is additional guidance available to help staff follow good practice on the e-safety toolkit area of the social media.
- 1.3 In this policy, we define **social media** to mean:

‘Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.’
- 1.4 In this policy, the word **staff** includes temporary and casual staff, agency staff, and volunteers during their time working with the school.
- 1.5 In this policy, the word **parents** is used to mean the parents, care-givers, and others with parental responsibility for a pupil at the school.
- 1.6 This policy works alongside other legislation, DFE statutory guidance, and other school and local authority policies such as Code of Employee Conduct, Online Safety Policy and Acceptable use agreement. These all also apply where relevant.

2. PURPOSE

This policy has been created to assure that information disclosed by SAIS and its employees' is timely, accurate, comprehensive, authoritative, and relevant to all aspects of school's system. In accordance with the SAIS Belief Statement that there must be a clear alignment among curriculum, instructional practice and assessment, this policy will provide the framework to facilitate the timely dissemination of information.

- (a) Adherence to this policy will reinforce its current non- discriminatory practices based on sex, race, color, national origin, religion, handicap, age, or disability.

clarify what the school considers to be appropriate and inappropriate use of social networking by staff.

- (b) encourage social networking to be used in a beneficial and positive way,
- (c) safeguard staff, pupils, parents, and members of the public from abuse through social networking,
- (d) safeguard the reputation of the school, other schools, other organizations, and employers from unwarranted abuse through social networking,
- (e) set out the procedures that will be followed where it is considered that staff have inappropriately or unlawfully used social networking.

3. SCOPE

This social media policy applies to all SAIS employees, teachers, students, Board Members, and auxiliary personnel. This policy covers all social media and media platforms, social networks, blogs, photo sharing, wikis, online forums, and video sharing.

4. DEFINITIONS

Term: Social Media Account

Definition: A personalized presence inside a social networking channel, initiated at will by an individual. YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat, and other social networking channels allow users to sign-up for their own social media account, which they can use to collaborate, interact, and share content and status updates. When a user communicates through a social media account, their disclosures are attributed to their User Profile.

Term: Social Media Channels

Definition: Blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, social networks, social bookmarking services, user rating services and any other online collaboration, sharing or publishing platform, whether accessed through the web, a mobile device, text messaging, email or other existing or emerging communications

platforms.

Term: Professional social media

Definition: Professional social media is a work-related social media activity that is either school based(e.g. establishing a Facebook page for school, school department), or non-school based.

Term: Social Media Disclosures

Definition: Blog posts, blog comments, status updates, text messages, posts via email, images, audiorecordings, video recordings or any other information made available through a social media channel. Social media disclosures are the actual communications a user distributes through a social media channel, usually by means of their social media account.

Term: Controversial Issues

Definition: Issues that form the basis of heated debate, often identified in political campaigns as wedge issues, since they provoke a strong emotional response. Examples include political views, health care reform, education reform and gun control.

Term: Inbound Links

Definition: An inbound link is a hyperlink that transits from one domain to another. A hyperlink that transits from an external domain to your own domain is referred to as an inbound link. Inbound links are important because they play a role in how search engines rank pages and domains in search results.

Term: Hosted Content

Definition: Text, pictures, audio, video, or other information in digital form that is uploaded and resides in the social media account of the author of a social media disclosure. If you download content off the Internet, and then upload it to your social media account, you are hosting that content. This distinction is important because it is generally illegal to host copyrighted content publicly on the Internet without first obtaining the permission of the copyright owner.

Term: Copyrights

Definition: Copyrights protect the right of an author to control the reproduction and use of any creative expression that has been fixed in tangible form, such as literary works, graphical works, photographic works, audiovisual works, electronic works and musical works. It is illegal to reproduce and use copyrighted content publicly on the Internet without first obtaining the permission of the copyright owner.

Term: Official Content

Definition: Publicly available online content created and made public by SAIS, verified by virtue of the fact that it is accessible through the school's website.

Term: Blog

Definition: An online journal that contains entries or posts that consist of text, links, images, video or other media and is usually between 300-500 words.

Term: Microblogging

Definition: Posting brief and often frequent updates online. Unlike traditional blogs, which are often hosted on a custom website, microblogs are typically published on social media sites like Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, and Facebook.

Term: Cyberbullying

Definition: Cyberbullying is the use of electronic information and communication devices, to include but not limited to email messages, instant messaging, text messaging, cellular telephone communications, Internet blogs, Internet chat rooms, Internet postings and defamatory websites.

5. FACULTY AND STAFF GUIDELINES

Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, Digital Images &

Video Personal Responsibility

Employees are personally responsible for the hosted content they publish online. Be mindful that what you publish on social media channels will be public for a long time protect your privacy.

When posting online, please remember that you are an employee of the SAIS and representative of your colleagues, students, parents, and the school community.

Your online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that you use face-to-face.

Blogs, wikis, and podcasts are an extension of your classroom and considered *official content*. What is inappropriate in the classroom should be deemed inappropriate online.

Do not post photos or movies of fellow employees without their permission. Do not use photos or movies taken at school without permission. Do not post photos or movies that contain students without parental consent. There are many websites that allow users to share personally created movies. You are responsible for all you do, say and post online including videos. Anything posted online should represent you in a professional manner as others will see you as connected to SAIS. It disrupts learning when teachers, employees and staff post videos with questionable content.

When posting online be sure not to post confidential student information.

Cyberbullying is not to be tolerated. Any incidence of cyberbullying should be reported to the school **Principal and Online Safety Officer** immediately. All cyberbullying incidents are to be taken seriously.

Personal use of social networking site, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram

Staff and employees are personally responsible for all comments/information and hosted content they publish online. Be mindful that things such as *Tweets* and *Status Updates* will be visible and public for a long time.

By posting comments, having online conversations, etc. on social media sites you are broadcasting to the world, be aware that even with the strictest privacy settings, what you 'say' online 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.

Comments related to SAIS, its employees, staff and events related to SAIS, 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.

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.

Before posting personal photographs, thought should be given as to whether the images reflect on your professionalism.

Photographs relating to alcohol or tobacco use may be deemed inappropriate. Remember, your social networking site is an extension of your personality, and an extension of your professional life and classroom. If it would seem inappropriate to put a certain photograph on the wall, then it should be considered inappropriate to post online.

Microblogging (Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, Instagram, 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 refrain from any comment and/or #hashtags that could be deemed unprofessional. # (Hashtags) that tag students and provide personal financial gain are prohibited. SAIS students are not to be used as a promotional audience. **SAIS employees are not permitted to solicit or accept "Friend" Requests from enrolled SAIS students on any personal Social Media Account. This includes student's accounts and SAIS employee personal accounts.**

SAIS employees are not permitted to encourage students (K-12) enrolled at SAIS to create Social Media Accounts of any kind.

All SAIS employees who choose to utilize Facebook, Twitter or Instagram or any other Social Media Platform to provide classroom information to students and parents must create a "teacher" page. Post must be exclusively about classroom or school activities.

6. Managing Procedure for posting videos and pictures on the school social media accounts

SAIS has 2 social media accounts:

1. Facebook Account (IT Teacher responsible for posting: Mohamad Zinati)
2. Instagram Account (IT Teacher responsible for posting: Mohamad Zinati)
3. Whatsapp Groups as a one-way communication with parents (Coordinators are the only members who can post information)
4. Class Dojo is used by KG and Elementary Teachers

1 & 2: Staff members, wishing to post videos or pictures on the school's social media accounts, should email their contribution to the concerned section coordinator responsible for the grade level, to which the post is related.

The section coordinator will then check the content of the videos and pictures, ensure that all students included in the videos and pictures have already submitted the consent letters signed by their parents to have them on the school social media accounts. (Each section coordinator saves all the consent letters in a folder on his/her workstation).

Once the checking is done, the coordinator will forward the email to Mr. Mohamad to post on the school social media accounts.

3. Section Coordinators post all information related to the hybrid learning environment on these groups. They are the only ones allowed to post information.
4. Class Dojo is used by KG and Elementary teachers as a means of communication with parents concerning their children's performance.

7. Staff-Student Relations

Employees are prohibited from establishing personal relationships with students that are unprofessional and thereby inappropriate. Examples of unprofessional relationships include, but are not limited to: employees fraternizing or communicating with students as if employees and students were peers such as writing personal letters or emails; "texting" students; calling students on cell phones or allowing students to make personal calls to them unrelated to homework or class work; sending inappropriate pictures to students; discussing or revealing to students personal matters about their private lives or inviting students to do the same.

Employees who post information on Facebook, Twitter or other similar websites that include inappropriate personal information such as, but not limited to: provocative photographs, sexually explicit messages, use of alcohol, drugs or anything students are prohibited from doing must understand that if students, parents or other employees obtain access to such information, their case will be investigated by school and authorities and if warranted, will be disciplined up to and including termination, depending on the severity of the offense.

The principal reserves the right to periodically conduct Internet searches to determine if employees have posted inappropriate materials online. If inappropriate use of computers and websites is discovered, the principal will download the offensive material and promptly bring misconduct to the attention of the COO.

8. Email

SAIS in accordance with its [Acceptable Use and Safety](#) policy, that all electronic or any other communications by employees to students or parents at any time, from any email system shall be expected to be professional, acceptable in content to any reasonable person, and limited to information that is school-related or is acceptable to both student and parent. Email between employees, students, and parents shall be done through the school provided email application. Email must conform to school email policies.

9. CYBERBULLYING:

Cyberbullying by a SAIS student directed toward another SAIS student or school staff member is conduct that disrupts both a pupil's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its pupils in a safe environment.

SAIS prohibits acts of cyberbullying by SAIS students through the use of any SAIS owned, operated, and supervised technologies. The school principal or designee may report allegations of cyberbullying to law enforcement authorities.

Any act online, the Internet or through electronic devices (cellular phones, tablets) that deliberately

threatens, harasses, intimidates an individual or group of individuals; places an individual in reasonable fear of harm to the individual or damage to the individual's property; has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school is considered cyberbullying.

Any student or school staff member that believes he/she has or is being subjected to cyberbullying, as well as any person who has reason to believe a student or school staff member has knowledge or reason to believe another pupil or school staff member is being subjected to or has been subjected to cyberbullying shall immediately make a report to the school principal and Online Safety Officer.

SAIS has a zero tolerance against cyberbullying and each reported instance will be handled in accordance with the UAE rules, policies, and guidelines.

10. MEDIA, PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILM

A reporter, producer or other news media may contact you for a number of reasons, for example:

To get information about SAIS, teachers, or employees.

To get information about a recent, unexpected event such as natural disasters, thefts or arrests, accidents, or injuries; parent or teacher complaints; etc.

To get information or comments about an action or event that could impact our school, teachers and/or staff, students or changes in school or government policies.

To get general information on a topical story in our community.

Refer all media calls to your school's *Principal*. Please do not say you are not allowed to talk to a reporter or have to get permission to do so. Instead, tell the reporter: "SAIS policy is to refer all media inquiries to the principal."

Please remember to contact your school's *Principal* if and when you have been approached by the media. Even though you have referred the media, the principal will need to prepare a response. Do not let a reporter compel you to answer questions on the spot. It is always beneficial to prepare in advance in order to provide accurate and relevant information.

A similar process as described above will be used when someone from the media is requesting permission to take photographs or to film inside one of our facilities. Refer the caller to your school's Principal. No one will be given access to your facility/school for a photo or filming without approval from the principal and equally important the principal will not give approval without talking in advance with the COO.

11. Monitoring use of social media on school equipment

- The school reserves the right to monitor **all** staff internet use, including when staff are making personal use of social media, on any school systems or equipment. Misuse of social media – even personal use – on school equipment is a breach of the school's acceptable use policy.

12. BLOGGING GUIDELINES AND BEST PRACTICES

SAIS continues to explore how online discourse through social media channels can empower teachers, students, parents, and staff. SAIS understands the importance of these interactions in helping to communicate the highlights of academic collaboration and achievement. SAIS is committed to continuing to explore new technologies and their best practices.

These Blogging Guidelines and Best Practices will help you to make appropriate decision about your SAIS-related blogging, blog content curation, and your responses to comments and blogs. The lines between public and private, personal, and professional are often blurred in the digital world.

By virtue of identifying yourself as a SAIS employee online, you are now connected to colleagues, students, parents and the school community. You should make sure that content associated with you is consistent with your work at SAIS.

All blogs and other media will be posted at the discretion of each school's Principal. Any blog or other social media involving SAIS can be posted and/or removed at the principal's discretion.

All blogs and other social media sites are a communication channel of SAIS and are to be maintained consistently throughout the school year.

SAIS employees are personally responsible for the content they publish online. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time. Remember to protect your privacy.

As with all online interaction, as a SAIS employee, your online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that you use face-to-face.

Remember that blogs are an extension of your classroom. What is inappropriate in your classroom should be deemed inappropriate online.

You may not share information that is confidential and proprietary about SAIS, its employees, students and/or staff.

When blogging, be respectful of your colleagues. Be thoughtful and accurate in your writing, and respectful of how other SAIS members may be affected.

Remember that blogs are *brief* and should not exceed more than 500 words. Be concise and know your audience.

When blogging online, do not post confidential student information, including grades, awards and/or disciplinary action. If you are unsure of what is considered confidential, contact your school's Principal.

SAIS employees should include disclaimers within their personal blogs that the views are their own and do not reflect on SAIS.

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

Remember to respect copyright and fair use guidelines. Be sure not to plagiarize and give credit when it is due.

Blogs and comments related to SAIS should always meet the highest standards of professional discretion. When posting or blogging, even on the strictest settings, staff should act on the assumption that all postings are in the public domain.

I have read, understand, and will abide by the above Policy. I further understand that any violation of the regulations above is unethical and may constitute a criminal offense. Should I commit any violation, my access privileges may be revoked, school disciplinary action may be taken, and/or appropriate legal action may be initiated, as per the following:

1st Occurrence: Verbal warning / Written Warning is issued depending on the violation degree.

2nd Occurrence: Final Written warning is issued; the staff member signs an undertaking.

3rd Occurrence: Dismissal from SAIS

User Name: (write your name please):

Date:

This policy was reviewed in August 2021.

