

# Social Media Policy

## Govan High School

### January 2018

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#### Rationale

Social media applications bring opportunities to understand, engage, and communicate in new and exciting ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our duties to our school, the community, our legal responsibilities 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 innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice. They apply to **all members of the school community**.

The purpose of the policy is to:

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

We publish information about our school and communicate with parents / carers in many ways:

- Parents' evenings
- Informal meetings
- Newsletters
- Email and text messages
- Our own School Website [www.govanhigh.glasgow.sch.uk/](http://www.govanhigh.glasgow.sch.uk/)
- Our own School Twitter @GovanHighSchool

We welcome anyone who is interested in the life of our school to follow us. At the moment this includes Twitter. This site allows us to communicate much more about day-to-day life in school; the kind of detail that wouldn't normally be enough for a newsletter or a meeting.

## Definitions and Scope

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to: blogs, online discussion forums, collaborative spaces, media sharing services, 'microblogging' applications, and online gaming environments. Examples include Twitter, Facebook, Windows Live Messenger, WhatsApp, YouTube, Flickr, PSN, Xbox Live and comment streams on public websites such as newspaper sites.

Within this policy there is a distinction between use of school sanctioned social media for professional educational purposes and personal use of social media.

## Use of Sites

It's important for everybody's safety that we are clear about how we use these sites and what is acceptable behaviour from the people who choose to follow us. We use our social media sites to publish information that is of general interest. We do not believe it is an appropriate place to discuss personal matters that are specific to individual members of our community, whether that be our children, or parents or staff.

## Privacy

- We will not publish photographs of children without the written consent of parents / carers (agreement signed by parents/carers and stored within the school)
- We will not allow personally identifying information to be published on our Twitter account

## Managing unacceptable actions on social media

We will not tolerate any form of bullying on social media accounts: information about such incidents will be dealt with according to Glasgow City Council Policy and could result in police intervention. Govan High School's policy on managing unacceptable actions by adult stakeholders is available beside this policy on the school website: [www.govanhigh.glasgow.sch.uk/](http://www.govanhigh.glasgow.sch.uk/)

## Use of Social Media in Practice

### 1. Personal use of social media

- School staff will not invite, accept or engage in communications with parents or children from the school community in any personal social media whilst in employment at Govan High School.
- Any communication received from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the designated person for Child Protection (Depute Headteacher).
- If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media, these must immediately be reported as above.
- Members of the school staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts.
- All email communication between staff and members of the school community on school business must be made from an official school email account.

- Staff should not use personal email accounts or mobile phones to make contact with members of the school community on school business, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances given prior approval by the Headteacher.
- Staff are advised to avoid posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the school and members of its community on any social media account.
- Staff are also advised to consider the reputation of the school in any posts or comments related to the school on any social media accounts.
- Staff should not accept any current pupil of any age or any ex-pupil of the school under the age of 18 as a friend, follower and subscriber or similar on any personal social media account.

## **2. School-sanctioned use of social media**

There are many legitimate uses of social media within the curriculum and to support children's learning. For example, the school has an official Twitter account (@GovanHighSchool).

There are also many possibilities for using social media to enhance and develop children's learning.

However, social media should NOT be used to:

- raise a concern about your child's progress
- discuss a sensitive/confidential issue
- raise a concern that you may have about staff or school procedures
- discuss an incident which involves other children/parent or carer

The issues above require time to talk, discuss and agree upon a solution which is not possible through online communication. We want to make sure that we address such issues carefully and sensitively, therefore ask that you contact the school office to arrange an appointment with the pupil's Pastoral Care teacher in the first instance.

The content of any school sanctioned social media should be solely professional and should reflect well on the school. Any inappropriate comments should be immediately reported to the ICT Co-ordinator who will guide next steps.

## **Social Media Policy**

Draft Policy created: January 2018

Next review date: June 2018

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# Appendices

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1. Glasgow City Council Social Media Information
2. GCC Twitter Guidance

## Appendix 1 – Glasgow City Council Social Media Information

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### **Council policy on use of Twitter**

## Twitter:

Twitter is a social networking and micro-blogging service that allows users to send and read short text updates (up to a maximum of 140 characters) via an Internet Web site. The updates are known as Tweets and are displayed on the user's profile page and can be read by anyone who has signed up to view them.

Glasgow City Council has developed its own page on Twitter which can be viewed at:

[www.twitter.com/glasgowcc](http://www.twitter.com/glasgowcc)

The council has developed Twitter guidance (please see Appendix 2) for staff who may be posting updates to its Twitter feed.

GCC encourages constructive comments about the services it provides and we believe that all customers have the right to be heard, understood and respected. We also consider that GCC staff have these same rights.

We retain the right, where we consider comments to be unacceptable, to restrict or change access to our service.

The threat or use of verbal abuse or harassment towards GCC staff on social media Web sites like Twitter is unacceptable behaviour. Incidents may be reported to the police.



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## Appendix 2 – GCC Twitter Guidance

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updates are known as Tweets and are displayed on the user's profile page and can be read by anyone who has signed up to view them. Glasgow City Council has developed its own page on Twitter which can be viewed at: [www.twitter.com/glasgowcc](http://www.twitter.com/glasgowcc) The service offers the Council the potential to transmit information about new services, developments and news in almost real-time to a potentially wide audience, many of whom will not necessarily find out about the Council through other, more traditional channels, such as the telephone, or face-to-face contact. As this is a new development and service provided by the Council to citizens and staff, the following Twitter usage protocols are proposed:

1. Council staff posting items to the Council's Twitter site must ensure the information is directly related to services and information provided by the Council. This may include reports from committees; news items; events; emergency information such as a building evacuation, or fire; information about items located on the Council's primary Web site and cancellations.
2. Postings about personal matters are not permitted, for example personal diaries; opinion; rants or anything not connected to the business of the Council.
3. Profanity is not permitted.
4. Party political content is not permitted.
5. Religious or sectarian content is not permitted.
6. The style of postings should follow that of the Council's corporate style guidelines, although some abbreviations (for reasons of space) are acceptable.
7. 'Text speak' is not permitted – for example we should always spell out 'you' and not use 'u'
8. Updates are to be as frequent as possible – Twitter lives or dies by the quality and quantity of its updates.
9. Pictures can be added, where the picture adds value to the posting.
10. Twitter can be updated via a Blackberry or mobile device – provided a small piece of software is downloaded first.
11. Remember that officers posting to the Glasgow City Council Twitter site are seen as representatives of the Council and its views.
12. Twitter is free to use and, as such, may sometimes be slow to access within the Council's network.
13. Twitter is intended to be fun, as well as informative.
14. You can hyperlink to items on the World Wide Web for further information. This is encouraged as the character limitations of Twitter mean it is not suitable for posting lengthy and complex information.