Date: May 2024
Review Date: August 2026
Responsibility: Deputy Head (Pastoral)

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR STAFF, PUPILS, PARENTS AND THE WIDER SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Introduction

The internet provides a range of social media tools that allow users to interact with one another; from rediscovering friends on social networking sites such as *Facebook* to keeping up with other people's lives on *Twitter or Instagram* and maintaining pages on internet encyclopaedias such as *Wikipedia*.
While recognising the benefits of this medium for new opportunities of communication, this policy sets out the principles that pupils, staff and the wider school community are expected to follow when using social media.
It is crucial that all stakeholders in Epsom College in Malaysia, including pupils, parents, staff and the public at large have confidence in the school. The principles set out in this policy are designed to ensure that the use of social media is responsibly undertaken and that confidentiality of pupils and staff and the reputation of the school are safeguarded.

All members of the school community must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate.

Scope

This policy applies to Epsom College in Malaysia pupils, staff, parents and the wider school community.

Under no circumstances may Epsom College in Malaysia logos, crests, typefaces or brands be used or published on any personal web space or on any online or offline medium without prior consent.

These are registered trademarks, patents and the intellectual property of Epsom College in Malaysia.

This policy covers personal use of social media as well as the use of social media for official school purposes, including sites hosted and maintained on behalf of the school.

This policy applies to personal web space such as social networking sites (for example *Facebook*, *MySpace, Instagram, SnapChat*), blogs, microblogs such as *Twitter & TikTok*, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopaedias such as *Wikipedia,* social bookmarking sites such as *del.icio.us* and content sharing sites such as *flickr* and *YouTube*. 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.

Related Policies

- Use of the Internet Policy
- Policy on Pupils' Use of ICT, Mobile Phones and Other Electronic Equipment
- Staff handbooks, rules and procedures
- Guidance for Pupils

Principles – Be Responsible and Respectful

- Users should be conscious at all times of the need to 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;

- Users should not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Epsom College into disrepute;

- Users should not represent their personal views as those of Epsom College in Malaysia on any social medium;

- Users should not discuss personal information about other pupils, Epsom College in Malaysia and the wider community they interact with on any social media;

- Users should not 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 Epsom College in Malaysia.

Personal use of Social Media

Pupils and members of the wider school community should not identify themselves as members of Epsom College in Malaysia in their personal web-space, unless specifically linked to an approved job role within the College community where it serves a purpose to professionally market the school. This is to prevent information being linked with the school and to safeguard the privacy of staff members, pupils and parents and the wider school community.

Pupils should not have contact through any personal social medium with any member of staff, whether from Epsom College in Malaysia or any other school, other than those mediums approved by the Senior Leadership Team or the Admissions and Marketing Department, unless the staff concerned are family members.

If pupils and members of the wider school community wish to communicate with staff they should only do so through official school sites created for this purpose, which at present may include iSAMS or through school generated google accounts which include (email, google chat, google classroom and google space). HMMs use Whatsapp to communicate directly with parents, however this communication must be professional and in keeping with school expectations of the use of social media.

Information that pupils and members of the wider community have access to as part of their involvement with Epsom College in Malaysia, including personal information, should not be discussed on their personal web space.

Photographs, videos or any other types of image of pupils and their families or images depicting staff members, clothing with school logos or images identifying school premises should not be published on personal or public web space without prior permission from the College.

We advise that school email addresses should not be used for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.

Staff, pupils, parents and the wider school community should not edit open access online encyclopaedias such as *Wikipedia* in a personal capacity. The source of the correction will be recorded and Epsom College in Malaysia reserves the right to amend these details for their sole purpose.

Epsom College in Malaysia only permits limited personal use of social media by pupils during the school day and at certain times during the evenings.

All staff, parents, pupils and members of the wider community are strongly advised to ensure that they set the privacy levels of their personal sites as strictly as they can and to opt out of public listings on social networking sites to protect their own privacy. All staff, parents, pupils and members of the wider community should keep their passwords confidential, change them often and be careful about what is posted online.

The College accepts that some sites may be used for professional purposes to highlight a personal profile with summarised details, e.g. Linkedin. The College would advise that care is taken to maintain an up to date profile and a high level of presentation on such sites if Epsom College in Malaysia is listed.

Staff who run blogging/microblogging sites which have a professional and/or educational status are advised to seek guidance and advice from the Admissions and Marketing Department regarding prudence and endorsement of views if there is any link referencing Epsom College.

Using Social Media - Epsom College in Malaysia

Pupils should only use official school sites for communicating with staff, or with other pupils to communicate with one another for the purposes of an educational context; iSAMS, Google (email, google chat, google classroom and google space) and individual House WhatsApp groups for administration purposes are the current platforms by which staff and pupils should communicate and no other medium should be used without careful consideration.

The Admissions and Marketing team have full responsibility for running the school's official website, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube sites. No other social media platforms may be set up by any member of the whole school community which have a direct or indirect connection with Epsom College in Malaysia. In addition, Epsom staff are responsible for any messages that are posted by their family members (especially if those individuals do not work at the College).

Whilst pupils and the wider school community are encouraged to interact with these social media sites they should do so with responsibility and respect.

Monitoring of Internet Use

Epsom College in Malaysia monitors usage of its internet, online content, online services and email services without prior notification or authorisation from users.

Users of Epsom College in Malaysia's email and internet services should have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send or receive using the school's ICT system.

Breaches of this Policy

Any breach of this policy that leads to a breach of confidentiality, defamation or damage to the reputation of Epsom College in Malaysia or any illegal acts or acts that render Epsom College in Malaysia liable to third parties may result in legal action, disciplinary action or sanctions in line with the published school policies for staff and pupils.

Guidelines for safe Social Media usage can be found on the following websites:

https://staysafeonline.org/resources/online-safety-basics/
http://www.getsafeonline.org/social-networking/social-networking-sites/#.Uq7_0lPs084