



# Brockenhurst College

## Social Media and Networking Policy for Students

### 1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to enable the efficient, effective and safe use of social media and to ensure that all users of social networking media are aware of what Brockenhurst College deems to be acceptable and unacceptable use and accordingly to operate within these parameters.

1.2 The definition of social media in the context of this policy is as follows: the opportunity to use instantaneous channels for information sharing and communication through social networking opportunities such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube. Social media can include text, audio, video, images, podcasts and other multimedia communications. It also includes the College's own internal systems, Canvas and Microsoft Teams.

1.3 Social media opportunities undoubtedly offer huge advantages in terms of student and staff to interact with each other and enhance communication and teaching and learning. However, such communication methods can increase the risk of misinformation, inappropriate communication, unprofessional behaviour and negative impact and it is therefore essential that there should be a policy in place in order for the College to fully embrace new methods of communication for 21st century educational delivery.

1.4 Brockenhurst College reserves the right to amend this policy at its discretion and the policy will be regularly reviewed to ensure relevance and currency in relation to College need and technological developments. All users will be informed of any changes deemed to be necessary.

### 2. Purpose of the Policy

2.1 This social media and networking policy applies to the use of social media to interact with the College staff or other students for the purposes of social interaction, teaching and learning, marketing, recruitment and promotional activities. This includes protecting the brand, image and reputation of Brockenhurst College and the privacy and wellbeing of members of staff and students at the College.

2.2 The Policy is applicable to students. A separate, related, code of conduct exists for members of staff.

2.3 It is expected that this policy be read in conjunction with the associated policies and strategies below and that it should also be considered as part of the overall safeguarding strategy and its related policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- IT & Telecommunication systems policy
- Equality and Diversity policy

2.4 The College recognises that students will inevitably make use of social media and networking sites within their own personal lives away from the College environment, as well as seeking to embrace the use of these technologies for their College activities.

2.5 This policy exists to support the appropriate use of these technologies for specific purposes and exists for the protection of both staff and students and reputation of the college. It therefore designed to be clear and explicit about appropriate behaviour.

2.6 The College is of the opinion that all information posted on the Internet using social media technologies, should be considered as published, permanent and potentially public, even if can be deemed as 'protected' in some way. Similarly, any information posted on any of the College's internal communication systems (Canvas, Microsoft Teams) should be considered as published, permanent and potentially public to all authorised users of these systems. By their very nature, social media technologies are designed to enable quick and simple ways of sharing information and it can be very easy to inadvertently share information to far more people than was originally intended. Seemingly innocent information such as photographs, videos, opinions or comments can be vulnerable to misrepresentation and unauthorised distribution.

### **3. Student Conduct**

3.1 As members of the College community students must abide by the terms of College policies and respect the rights of fellow students and staff, as well as the reputation of the College. They should think carefully about how they express themselves, and bear in mind the need to safeguard themselves. Material posted on the Internet can be hard to delete and should, therefore be considered permanent.

3.2 Where students make use of social media and networking technologies (including both internally and externally hosted sites) it is expected that they should not post comments or any other type of material on a social networking site, blog, or send text messages/digital messages that:

- Contain unwanted sexual comments or content.
- Could be viewed as bullying or harassing another member of the College community.
- May be interpreted to be racist, homophobic, sexist, ageist or otherwise discriminatory about another member of the College community.
- Are counter to the College's Equality and Diversity Policy or IT Security Policy
- Contains language, sound or video which may cause offense to another member of the College community.
- Expresses opinions or encourages other members of the College community in the incitement of violence, extremism or to break the law.
- Are likely to bring the College into disrepute.
- Contribute to exacerbating an issue with another student or group.

Any transgression of the above guidelines will be viewed as serious by the College, will be dealt with through the College disciplinary procedures and may result in a removal of College place. The College will not hesitate to involve the Police when it considers appropriate. Especially in relation to online sexual harassment, or threatening behaviour that the College has zero tolerance.

### **3.3 Monitoring online presence**

The College uses online monitoring and filtering software to help keep its students safe and prohibit accessing certain content through the network and when using the wi-fi. Students should be aware that all use of the College systems is governed by the Acceptable Use Policy and the college Email and IT Security Policies.

Students must be aware that any (repeated) breach may result in action in line with the Behaviour and Learner Disciplinary Policy.

If students become aware of, or are concerned about any inappropriate comments or material that is posted online they should draw these to the attention of a member of staff in order that appropriate investigation and action may be taken. This can be achieved by verbally reporting to a member of staff or by emailing [safe@brock.ac.uk](mailto:safe@brock.ac.uk).

## **4. Monitoring and Review**

4.1 This policy is implemented by the College's Planning and Advisory board under the ownership of the Senior Management Team. The committee is comprised of different stakeholders including the Safeguarding Officer, members of the Senior Management Team, and staff from across the College.

4.2 The impact of the policy will be monitored regularly by the Senior Management Team and with a full review being carried out every two years. The policy will also be reconsidered where particular concerns are raised or where an e-safety incident has been recorded.