



ALSOP HIGH SCHOOL

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Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents and Carers

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Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents

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I Introduction

Social media is increasingly a part of many of our lives, in both professional and personal capacities, allowing us to easily connect with a wide range of people and organisations.

In creating this policy, Alsop High is not seeking to dissuade the distribution of information online or the freedom of expression of parents/carers. Equally, the School is not seeking to stifle criticism; the School welcomes any and all feedback provided through the appropriate channels. The purpose of this policy is to encourage mindful reflection by parents and carers of their online interactions with Alsop High School and its staff.

Whilst Alsop High recognises the value of social networking, it is important to be mindful of the potential risks in using services, which can at times blur the line between professional and personal, private and public. Social media websites, whilst offering much potential for sharing information, can be used to fuel campaigns and circumnavigate legitimate complaints against schools and academies, including against staff, and in some cases other parents/carers or students. Such use of social media can result in damage to the school community by damaging Alsop High School's reputation. Alsop High School considers the use of social media being used in this way as unacceptable and not in the best interests of students, the School and staff. Social networking sites set out clear rules about the content which can be posted on their sites and also provide robust mechanisms to report contact or activity which breaches this.

As a School we relish the opportunity to be part of the regeneration of the areas we work in and it is important to adopt a partnership approach with parents/carers, and to speak directly with any members of the community involved when any concerns are raised. By posting content online, rather than through appropriate channels, parents/carers deprive Alsop High of the opportunity to address concerns swiftly and effectively.

It is not always possible to prevent comments being posted online, however, there are legal implications should comments make a credible threat to safety, name a member of staff who is subject to an allegation, contain hate content, contain factually inaccurate and/or defamatory content, or could be considered as harassment.

This document serves to outline the expectations of parents/carers, students and others in their use of social media. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that methods of communication are used effectively.

2 Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to any and all statutes and guidance including (but not limited to):

- Data Protection Act 1998
- Defamation Act 2013
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (as amended)
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- The Communications Act 2003
- The Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 ● The Harassment Act 1997
- The General Data Protection Regulation 2018

3 Expectations

Parents/carers, students and staff have a reasonable expectation that all members of the school community will treat them with respect and dignity. This applies to all communication; written and verbal, online or otherwise.

Parents/carers are requested to set an example to students via their communication, in particular online. It's worth noting that cyber-bullying is a real concern for our students and parents play a key role in demonstrating to students what behaviour is and is not acceptable.

Alsop High School expects parents and students to behave in a civilised manner online and not post abusive, harassing or inappropriate comments regarding any student, parent/carer or member of staff. Parents/carers are invited to use Alsop's Complaints Procedure to address any concerns or complaints they have.

Alsop High School recognises the value social media brings to the school community and would encourage the distribution of positive and congratulatory messages about the school and its students.

Alsop High School also welcomes the use of social media for parents/carers, community groups etc to liaise between themselves regarding School matters, such as the creation of a social media page in advance of a trip in order to share ideas and co-ordinate travel. However, any such sites should not be set up using the name of the School or using any Alsop logos or branding and must not be set up in such a way that they appear to be representing Alsop High. Such sites should also be set as private groups so that information is kept as private possible and access is limited to those who have a legitimate reason to do so.

Alsop High School has its own social media pages and any third party pages set up with the intention of imitating or impersonating these pages will be removed.

Alsop High School will not tolerate abusive or disruptive behaviour within any area of the School grounds or on social media. The School retains the right to withdraw permission for parents/carers to enter the School site, under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure the safeguarding of students and staff. Parents/carers or students making inappropriate comments online towards staff or other students will be asked to remove said comments immediately. Parents who make threats of physical harm towards any student, parent or staff member may be banned from the School grounds. Students may face other disciplinary sanctions as a result of any inappropriate behaviour online.

It will always be the intention of Alsop High to resolve any concerns or complaints (see complaints policy) at the earliest possible stage and we would always encourage those with concerns to raise them with the appropriate person in the first instance.

4 Code of Conduct

Alsop High School would expect that parents/carers and students support them in providing a safe, positive and respectful learning environment for their children/themselves by:

- Refraining from making complaints, negative comments or factually inaccurate statements about Alsop High School or any of its staff in any public forum including social networking sites. If a parent/carer wishes to make a formal complaint then the school's complaints procedure should be followed.
- Supporting the implementation of the Home-School Agreement which asks parents to support the School's approach to online safety, cyber-bullying and malicious communications.
- Showing respect and concern for others both inside and outside of School.
- Set a good example in their own speech and behaviour towards all members of School staff
- Not naming any pupils or staff in a negative context online – instead parents and carers are invited to discuss matters directly with the School and/or use Alsop High School's complaints procedure in order to address concerns/complaints.
- Work in partnership with the School for the benefit of children; this includes approaching the School to resolve any issues of concern and to discuss and clarify specific events in order to bring about a positive solution
- Respect the learning environment appropriately (both on and off site)
- Not posting photos of students at the School without obtaining the relevant consent (from the students or their parents/carers) and to be mindful of safeguarding implications when posting content online.
- Not posting photos of Alsop High School staff. This includes using photos found on the School website.
- Not posting any content online under the pretence or guise of the School. This includes the use of Alsop High School logos or the setting up of pages using the School name or branding.

5 Further Action

Any negative comments posted online result in a negative impact on the image of the School. This negative impact can have a lasting effect and cause significant reputational damage which in turn affects the hard work all Alsop High School staff do to deliver the best possible education for our students. Comments about individuals, such as individual staff members or other parents/students, can have serious consequences on their wellbeing. As outlined above, other methods of redress are available

for all to use in order to address concerns/complaints (such as the Alsop High School Complaints Procedure) and therefore there should be no legitimate reason for this content to be published in any other form. For this reason, Alsop High School will consider all negative content posted online extremely seriously.

The first course of action where any inappropriate content online is identified by the School, or our staff will be for the person(s) responsible to be invited to remove this content. This could be by written request or those responsible may be asked to attend the School for a formal meeting where the request will be made verbally.

Alsop High School will not respond to complaints or allegations via social media sites.

Reporting offending material

If a person does not agree to remove any offending content or pages they have set up, then the School will report offending material to the Social Media site in question. Depending on the content, a referral may also be made to the Police. It is worth noting that many Social Media site's policies (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) have their own processes for dealing with such material which include the possibility of permanently disabling accounts and banning users.

In some cases it may be necessary for the School to seek legal advice on comments posted on a social media site. This may result in a letter from the School being sent out to the parents warning them that if content is not removed legal action will be taken.

If, after the steps above the content is still not removed, legal action may be taken directly against those responsible for the content.

In all cases where a criminal offence has been committed then Police advice will be sought at an early stage. If there is an immediate risk of harm to any member of the School community this will be reported via 999.

6 Related Policies

- Alsop High School Complaints Procedure