



## Social Media Policy

2023 -2024

Approved by:

Mr Mohsin Ibrahim

Date of review:

September 2022

Next review date:

September 2023



## Our Mission Statement

At GEMS WSR Westminster School, Ras Al Khaimah, we recognise that each child is an individual; that all children are creative; that all children need to succeed. Our school promotes a safe, orderly, caring, and supportive environment that follows a strong moral code. And we will continually strive to have our parents, teachers, and community members actively involved in our students' learning.

### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure communications by employees in and on online social networks are consistent with the GEMS WSR Employee Code of Conduct. These online social networks include, but are not limited to, multi-media and social network sites (Facebook, LinkedIn, Flickr, Podcasts, Yahoo, Twitter, YouTube, etc.), blogs (GEMS WSR Blogs and external), wikis (e.g. Wikipedia) and other user-generated media and sites where text, photos or videos may be posted, whether for personal or professional purposes.
- 1.2 The policy requirements in this document aim to:
  - Ensure that the reputation of the school, its staff and governors is protected
  - Safeguard all children
  - Protect the school from legal risks
  - Ensure that any users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the school

### 2. PROCEDURE

- 2.1 Employees are personally responsible and liable for the content they publish online, on any social network.
- 2.2 Members of staff are advised to consider the reputation of the school and corporate organization in any posts or comments related to the school on any social media accounts.
- 2.3 GEMS WSR employees are required to respect and adhere to all host country laws relating to access to specific sites and social networks. Failure to do so may result in internal disciplinary action as well as legal penalties.
- 2.4 Employees are legally responsible for their postings and may be subject to liability should the post be found defamatory, libellous and/or slanderous, constituting any form of harassment, discriminatory, or in violation of applicable law.
- 2.5 Employees' personal comments published online relevant to GEMS WSR must include a disclaimer indicating that the views are their own and not of GEMS WSR.



## Personal use of social media

2.6 Direct contact between teachers and students is always an area where special care has to be taken because child safeguarding issues are at stake. Communication is only permissible where it is required for work purposes as below.

2.7 In scenarios where a teacher and student will have contact via social media (such as subject related Facebook group where personal profiles are required to engage) communication should be transparent, accessible to line managers and parents and professional in content and tone.

2.8 Any communication received from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the principal and nominated safeguarding leader.

2.9 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.

2.10 Staff should not accept any current pupil 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.

2.11 It is recognized that GEMS WSR teachers and other members of staff are often connected to GEMS WSR parents through personal social media, especially within expatriate communities. These relationships can bring significant personal benefits and also enhance the reputation of the company where the content posted by employees is positive. In such interactions, GEMS WSR employees must remain mindful of their association to the company and posts must not bring GEMS WSR adverse publicity or into disrepute.

2.12 Members of the school staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts.

2.13 It is highly encouraged that email communication between staff and members of the school community on school business should be made from an official school email account. Use of personal email addresses may be permitted in circumstances such as using Google forms.

2.14 Employees must refrain from citing clients, partners or colleagues without approval from the GEMS WSR Corporate Communications and the individuals concerned.

2.15 Employees must be aware of their association to GEMS WSR in personal online social networks. If an employee identifies themselves as a GEMS WSR employee, they must ensure their profile and content is professional at all times.

2.16 Online postings should not disclose any information that is confidential or proprietary to GEMS WSR or to any third party that has disclosed information to the company. Such confidential information could include details and information regarding an employee's business travel and employees should exercise due care in not revealing information which could give third parties insights into GEMS WSR's business which they would otherwise not readily have access to. If you are unsure whether a certain piece of information may be published, check with GEMS WSR Legal prior to publishing such information.

## **School sanctioned use of social media**

- 2.17 The content of any school-sanctioned social media sites should be solely professional and should reflect well on the school.
- 2.18 Admin rights of the account should be designated to a particular member(s) of staff responsible for posting and monitoring of content.
- 2.19 Details of the administrator/login details/site URL must be forwarded to the GEMSWS Re-Safety Team for recordkeeping.
- 2.20 Any social media accounts set up should be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by that member of staff, and ideally should be linked to an official school email account.



1 The social media account is not permitted to be run by students themselves; there must be a designated member(s) of staff responsible for posting content. However, students would still be free to post on official comments and are encouraged to engage with material.

2.22 Regular monitoring is the key to maintaining an account which is appropriate and engaging.

2.23 Employees must respect their audience. They should not use ethnic slurs, personal insults, or engage in conduct that brings GEMS WSR adverse publicity or into disrepute (please refer to the GEMS WSR 'Employee Code of Conduct Policy').

2.24 Staff must ensure they follow the correct school guidelines when posting images of students on social media sites, i.e. any students whose parents have indicated their child's photograph cannot be used must not be featured, etc.

2.25 Care must be taken that any links to external sites from the account are appropriate and safe.

2.26 Staff should not engage with any direct messaging of students through social media where the message is not public.

#### Other

2.27 All requests for interviews and/or questions/emails from the media are to be forwarded to GEMS WSR Corporate Communications. GEMS WSR employees shall not conduct media interviews or make comments to the media without seeking approval from GEMS WSR Corporate Communications.

2.28 Inquiries from outside attorneys, regulators or government agencies should be directed to GEMS WSR Legal.

2.29 Any enquiries related to use of social media for marketing and communications purposes can be directed towards: