



ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS POLICY STAFF

Our Mission

Farnborough Hill welcomes all into our community, where we aim to live Christ's Gospel values joyfully and wholeheartedly, forming each individual to fulfil her potential and face the future with wisdom, strength and dignity.

Social media offers opportunities to create, share and interact with content, virtual communities and networks. It is important that we maximise these opportunities for the good of the School but it is also important that we balance this with our duties to the School, the community, our legal responsibilities and our reputation.

For the purposes of this policy, social media platforms include, but are not limited to blogs and podcasts, online discussion forums, collaborative spaces, media sharing services, online gaming spaces and virtual worlds.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents and policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (including Staff Code of Conduct)
- Behaviour Policy
- Departmental Instagram Guidelines
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Taking, Storing and Using Names and Images of Pupils Policy
- Technology Acceptable Use Policy for Pupils
- Technology Acceptable Use Policy for Staff

Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- provide a framework of good practice for the School community to encourage safe and appropriate use of social media, both personally and on behalf of the School
- help safeguard children
- protect the School from legal risk
- protect the reputation of the School, its staff and governors
- ensure that any social media can easily distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the School

Legal framework

Users need to be aware that information shared through social media, even privately, is subject to copyright, The Data Protection Act 2018, Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Online Safety Act 2025.

Personal Use of Social Media by staff

Staff are expected to keep their personal and professional/school lives separate and not put themselves in a position where they may be a conflict between these interests. We recommend that staff maintain the latest security settings on their personal accounts and school email addresses should not be used to set up personal accounts.

Staff should demonstrate proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of Farnborough Hill and not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Farnborough Hill into disrepute. They should be careful not to represent their personal views as those of Farnborough Hill. In addition, staff are expected to show tolerance of, and respect for, the rights of others including actively supporting fundamental British values – democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Social media links that exist between school staff and pupils before they become employed/volunteer at the School are expected to cease when they join the school. Where friendships exist between school staff and parents before they become Farnborough Hill parents, ie before their daughters attend the School, we would not expect these friendships to change, but staff should be mindful of comments that they make in relation to the School.

Any communication received from current pupils (or ex pupils under the age of 18/still in full-time education) on any personal social media sites must be reported to the Head of Year, copying the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Staff who become aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child on a social media platform, must immediately report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Staff must not:

- seek to glorify criminal activity or violent extremism, or to radicalise pupils through extreme or narrow views of faith, religion, culture or other ideologies
- attack, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, colleagues, other professionals, other organisations or Farnborough Hill
- engage in any illegal activities using online platforms
- refer to individual or community matters relating to the School or disclose the personal information of any member of the School community on any social media accounts or represent their personal views as those of Farnborough Hill
- pass personal social media details to, or engage via social media in any way with, current pupils (or ex-pupils under the age of 18 /still in full-time education)

Professional use of social media

The School accepts that staff may wish to use sites such as LinkedIn for professional development purposes. We request that care is taken to maintain an up-to-date profile and a high level of presentation where any association to Farnborough Hill is made. Staff who run blogging/microblogging sites which have a professional and/or educational status are advised to seek guidance from Director of Admissions and Marketing, where there is any link or reference made to Farnborough Hill.

Use of School IT resources for personal social media

We recognise that staff may work long hours and occasionally wish to access personal social media at School or by means of our computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems (including smartphones and tablets). We authorise such occasional use provided it is minimal and takes place substantially out of normal working hours, does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content, does not interfere with your employment responsibilities or productivity and is in accordance with this Policy and the ICT policy.

Circulating or posting commercial, personal, religious or political solicitations, or promotion of outside organisations unrelated to the School's business are prohibited. Staff must ensure that their use of social media does not create any breaches of internet security and must avoid applications that might interrupt our IT systems. Excessive use of social media that interrupts staff productivity will be subject to a disciplinary procedure, consistent with this policy.

Permission to use the School's systems to access social media platforms for personal use may be withdrawn at any time at the School's discretion. Staff must not use School IT resources and communications systems for any matter that you wish to be kept private or confidential from the School.

The monitoring of social media

Staff should be aware that, as per the Technology Acceptable Use Policy for Staff, Farnborough Hill filters, monitors and records all ICT usage and activity both in school and on school cloud-based software. Any such monitoring will be for legitimate business purposes which include:

- Ascertaining and demonstrating that our rules are being complied with
- Demonstrating that expected standards are being met by those using the systems
- For the detection and investigation of unauthorised use of the systems (including where this is necessary to prevent or detect crime)

This might include, without limitation, the monitoring, interception, accessing, recording, disclosing, inspecting, reviewing, retrieving and printing of transactions, messages, communications, postings, log-ins, recordings and other uses of the systems as well as keystroke capturing and other network monitoring technologies.

We may store copies of such data or communications for as long as is necessary for our legitimate business purposes in accordance with data protection law. We may delete such copies periodically or from time to time without notice when their retention is no longer necessary.

I. Use of Social Media for Marketing purposes

In addition to the departmental Instagram accounts, the School has a wide social media presence specifically to engage with current and prospective parents. All school social media accounts are ultimately owned by the Marketing Department and managed, either directly or indirectly via the departments, to ensure they reflect well on the School.

Images should not normally include any means of identification but first names may occasionally be used at the discretion of the department. Images of girls will not be used without permission of their parents. No member of staff should engage directly with a pupil through School social media accounts and must take care to ensure that any links to external sites or third party endorsement is appropriate and safe. Any inappropriate comments on, or abuse of, school-sanctioned social media should immediately be removed and reported to the Director of Admissions and Marketing.

2. Social media and end of employment

At the end of a period of employment with the School, personal profiles on social networking sites should be immediately amended to reflect the fact that staff are no longer employed or associated with the School.

All professional contacts that a member of staff has made through their course of employment with Farnborough Hill belong to the School, regardless of whether or not the member of staff has made social media connections with them.

On the termination of employment for any reason, and when requested by the School at any time, staff will provide to their line manager any relevant passwords and other information to allow access to any social media site, page or account which has been used or set up for the purpose of furthering the School's business or facilitating the provision of its curriculum and will relinquish any authority they may have to manage or administer any such site, page or account.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Director of Admissions and Marketing and the Headmistress.

The next review is due in September 2026.