

# School Social Media Policy

## 1. Definitions

1.1. In this Policy the following terms shall bear the following meanings:

1.1.1. **"Banned Content"** shall mean Criminal Content, Defamatory Content and any other content which contains items or comments including but not limited to the below:

- 1.1.1.1. speech that discriminates based on any individual characteristic including but not limited to gender, race, sexual orientation, religion ethnicity etc;
- 1.1.1.2. explicit or pornographic images or content of any type including suggestive content relating to a minor;
- 1.1.1.3. content that is graphic, violent or otherwise offensive;
- 1.1.1.4. defamatory content;
- 1.1.1.5. content that is harassing or threatening and could cause someone physical, mental or emotional harm;
- 1.1.1.6. any content that could negatively affect our school or any of the people associated with it (e.g. students, other staff members etc);
- 1.1.1.7. any content that discloses private information about our school, students or our staff;
- 1.1.1.8. any content that may be used for unlawful purposes, or that aims to assist with unlawful conduct;
- 1.1.1.9. any content that does not belong to staff and students; (i.e. is someone else's intellectual property); and
- 1.1.1.10. any content that is fraudulent or untrue.

1.1.2. **"Criminal Content"** shall mean any content which could be deemed to fall within the definition of a Crime as set out in the Criminal Procedure Act, including the crime of Crimen Injuria;

1.1.3. **"Crimen Injuria"** shall mean the crime under South African common law, defined to be the act of "unlawfully, intentionally and seriously impairing the dignity of another";

1.1.4. **“Defamatory Content”** shall mean any statement that is published which has the effect of injuring a person’s reputation. A person’s reputation is injured if the statement in question tends to lower their person in the estimation of right-thinking members of society;

1.1.5. **“Publish”** shall mean the action of disseminating or creating content on Social Media. For the sake of clarity, this shall include content that has been seen by one other person on Social Media. It shall also mean any content that one associates with by, including but not limited to, ‘retweeting’, ‘sharing’, ‘liking’ or being ‘tagged’ in it. Finally, it also refers to content that is found on an instant messaging group that staff and students are a part of or comments that occur on a post that staff and students created– even if staff and students did not make the content themselves.

1.1.6. **“Social Media”** shall mean any facility that enables communications and publication over the internet including, but not limited to; blogs, platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Live.ly, Music.ly, Twitter, Snapchat, Facebook Messenger, YouTube, instant messaging platforms, gaming platforms and any other forms of communication that may now and/or in the future be classified or generally regarded as social media;

## **2. Major School Rules and Disciplinary Procedure Document**

2.1. For the sake of clarity, this Policy Document is subject to Bishop’s Major School Rules, Codes of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure Documents.

2.2. Any transgressions of this Policy will be dealt with in accordance with the Major School Rules, Codes of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure Documents.

## **3. Introduction, Purpose and Scope**

3.1. Bishops recognises that Social Media is a great tool, which comes with lots of learning benefits and opportunities. However, if Social Media is not used well it can present huge risks to individuals and organisations, and the negative consequences of Social Media use can have long-lasting repercussions.

- 3.2. As we do not want the risks of Social Media to prevent staff and students from utilising same for their own benefit, we have compiled this Social Media Policy for all staff and students of Bishops, to set out what is expected of them when using Social Media.
- 3.3. The purpose of this Policy is to govern the use by Bishops' staff and students of any Social Media platforms in any communications, whether these platforms are enabled by Bishops or by third parties, and whether the communications are regarding Bishops or otherwise.
- 3.4. In addition to the terms of this Policy, staff and students are also required to adhere to all of the Terms and Conditions laid out by the Social Media platforms that they use, as well as the laws of the Republic of South Africa. Note that Bishops limits the use of instant messaging services, for school business only to making arrangements for certain group or sports events. Outside of such limited official use, we understand that students, staff and parents may prefer to make use of such tools to communicate with each other. However, doing so is entirely at the user's own risk and is done voluntarily and without it being required or encouraged by the School. We take no responsibility for the processing of any personal information that you may submit to the owners of the relevant platforms while using their services in your personal capacity, as they do not process your personal information on the School's behalf or at its behest.
- 3.5. All of the below shall apply to Prep students notwithstanding the fact that age restrictions apply to the use of social media which thus precludes the majority of Prep students, but we acknowledge that such restrictions can be ignored by individual students. While each student from Grade 4 – 7 has his own Ipad for educational use Prep students are not allowed cell phones at school. Any transgressions of this Policy will be dealt with in terms of the Prep Code of Conduct.

#### **4. Rules Regarding staff and students Participation in Social Media**

##### **4.1. General**

- 4.1.1. Whilst Bishops respects the rights of all staff and students to freedom of expression and does not object to or discourage the use of Social Media, Bishops has an obligation to protect its employees, parents, students, reputation and private information.



4.1.2. As a result, we ask that staff and students not do anything on Social Media that may bring the name of Bishops into disrepute, and we ask that staff and students act in the best interests of Bishops on Social Media.

4.1.3. Staff and students also have a legal duty to ensure that all of their communications on Social Media are lawful, do not cause harm and do not infringe on other peoples' rights.

4.1.4. Staff and students are reasonably identifiable as staff and students at Bishops when interacting on Social Media platforms and as a result, Bishops may be linked with any information, comments and submissions that are shared or made by them on Social Media platforms and can suffer damages as a result of same.

4.1.5. As a result of the above, Bishops asks its staff and students to exercise personal responsibility when they engage in Social Media and to adhere to the terms of this Policy.

#### **4.2. Rules**

4.2.1. Staff and students may not Publish anything on Social Media that constitutes Banned Content (see page 1).

4.2.2. Staff and students may not Publish anything that is contrary to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa or any other laws. This includes publishing anything that infringes on the privacy of any person or is in breach of the provisions of the Protection of Personal Information Act;

4.2.3. Staff and students may not Publish anything that is in any way derogatory of Bishops, its students, staff, parents and/or affiliates.

4.2.4. Staff and students should remember, when interacting on Social Media, that they are acting as an ambassador of Bishops, as they are reasonably identifiable as a staff member or student at our school.



- 4.2.5. Staff and students may not air their internal grievances regarding Bishops, its students, staff, parents and/or affiliates online.
- 4.2.6. Staff and students are expected at all times on Social Media to prioritise the privacy and confidentiality of Bishops and all of its staff, students and parents.
- 4.2.7. Staff and students may not Publish any other individual's personal information (including in videos, images, photographs or messages of or from them) without their express permission.
- 4.2.8. Staff and students may not use Bishop's name or logo on Social Media unless staff and students have specific written permission from the Principal.
- 4.2.9. Students may not falsify an account or profile or assume a false identity at all on Social Media.
- 4.2.10. Bishops retains the right to examine the Social Media accounts (if accessible) of any individual associated with the school.
- 4.2.11. during Grade 8 and 9, any Social Media groups or chats, which are to be set up only for the purposes of house or sport communication, must be monitored by a matric leader, teacher, coach or manager (as applicable). This is done to ensure that the groups are kept positive and free from abuse.

#### **4.3. Escalation Procedure**

- 4.3.1. If staff members or students becomes aware of a discussion, posting, comment or misrepresentation on Social Media that needs to be brought to the attention of Bishops and/or has the potential to impact on the reputation of an individual associated with Bishops or Bishops as a whole, they are required to immediately notify their line manager or, if a student, a member of staff at Bishops. (This notification should, if possible, be accompanied by a screenshot of, and a link to the relevant content.)