

COGNITA

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY (MIDDLE EAST)

INTRODUCTION

Social media plays a significant role in our lives. We recognise the importance of maintaining a positive and respectful online environment. We also recognise that our parents and guardians come from a range of jurisdictions in which social media laws may differ to those across the jurisdictions in which we operate across the Middle East.

Each of the jurisdictions in which we operate across the Middle East has strict laws protecting privacy and governing the use of social media platforms, breaches of which can attract criminal penalties including fines and imprisonment. It is important that we all familiarize ourselves with applicable laws which include, for example, cybercrimes legislation, data protection laws and broader penal code provisions governing online conduct.

We also ask that all members of our community remain mindful that local laws across our jurisdictions regulate online content more broadly, including content that may be considered contrary to public order, religious values or public morals.

This policy outlines the appropriate use of social media by parents and guardians in relation to our school community, ensuring that we all contribute to a safe and supportive environment for our students.

GUIDELINES

When using social media in a manner which relates to the school or our community, please follow the guidelines below. When we refer to school or community related social media, this includes WhatsApp groups with other parents and guardians of the school.

DO

- **RESPECT PRIVACY:** photos of others should only be shared only with explicit consent. Avoid posting images or details that could identify others without their permission. Doing so could amount to a criminal offence.
- **PROMOTE POSITIVITY:** use social media to celebrate achievements, share positive experiences, and support school events. Constructive feedback should be communicated directly to the school rather than posted publicly.
- **REPORT CONCERNS PRIVATELY:** if you have concerns or issues regarding school policies, staff, or other students, address them directly with the school rather than airing grievances on social media.
- **FOLLOW SCHOOL GUIDELINES:** adhere to any specific social media guidelines or codes of conduct set by the school.

DON'T

- **MAKE DEROGATORY COMMENTS:** refrain from posting or sharing false or defamatory statements about the school, its staff, students, parents, guardians or the broader school community. Defamatory content can damage reputations and harm relationships within our school community. The jurisdictions in which we operate have wide reaching defamation laws, breaches of which can attract criminal sanctions.
- **SHARE CONFIDENTIAL OR SENSITIVE INFORMATION:** do not post confidential or sensitive information about school operations, events, or individuals. This includes information that could compromise the privacy or safety of our students and staff.
- **SHARE MISINFORMATION:** do not post, share or forward content that you know or suspect to be false, misleading or unverified, particularly where it relates to the school, its staff, students or the broader school community. The spread of false information online is a criminal offence across our jurisdictions, carrying penalties including fines and imprisonment.
- **BULLY, THREATEN OR HARASS:** do not use social media to bully, threaten or harass others. Any form of online bullying is unacceptable and can have serious consequences, including criminal sanctions.
- **DISRESPECT COPYRIGHT:** ensure that any content shared, including images and text, complies with copyright laws and does not infringe on intellectual property rights.

CONCERNS REGARDING THE SCHOOL AND ITS COMMUNITY

We strive to provide the best level of service to our students and families. Nevertheless, we recognise that concerns will arise and we welcome an open, constructive and respectful dialogue in relation to such concerns.

In the first instance, concerns should be raised to your class teacher or the school principal informally. We expect most concerns can be addressed constructively and informally. Where a concern cannot be resolved informally, the school has in place a complaints procedure which should be followed.

It is never appropriate to raise concerns regarding the school, its staff or the broader school community on social media. This includes WhatsApp or other chat groups with members of the school community as well as broader public forums such as Instagram and Facebook.

Social media posts which defame or disparage the school, its staff or the broader school community will not be tolerated. Parents / guardians will be asked to remove the offending post and, where required, the school will escalate the issue to the appropriate authorities including, where appropriate, the police.

We appreciate your cooperation in maintaining a respectful and supportive online presence. By following this policy, we can collectively ensure that our school remains a positive and safe environment for all members of our community.