



مدرسة الأفاق الحديثة ذ.م.م.
NEW HORIZON SCHOOL W.L.L.

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE POLICY



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SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE POLICY

Document Code	NHS/ADM/DIG/02
Department	Administration / Student Affairs
Responsible Officer	Principal
Applies To	Students, staff and school-related digital platforms

Reviewed Date: October 2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear and consistent standards for the responsible use of social media by members of the New Horizon School community and to provide a fair, confidential and evidence-based procedure for responding to social media incidents.

The policy aims to:

- Protect students, staff and the wider school community from online bullying, harassment, threats, humiliation and other harmful digital conduct.
- Promote responsible, respectful and safe digital citizenship.
- Distinguish legitimate student expression, criticism and opinion from misconduct.
- Ensure that concerns are assessed on verified information rather than assumptions.
- Preserve relevant digital evidence appropriately and securely.
- Provide a consistent process for investigation, student meetings and parent/guardian involvement.
- Guide the school in reporting inappropriate content to the relevant social media platform where appropriate.
- Ensure serious safeguarding or legal concerns are escalated appropriately.
- Protect individuals who raise genuine concerns or cooperate with an investigation from retaliation.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all students, staff and authorised personnel using social media or school-related digital platforms, whether the activity occurs on or off school premises, where it has a significant and identifiable impact on the New Horizon School community.

It covers incidents involving, but not limited to:

- Anonymous confession, gossip or similar accounts involving New Horizon School.
- Accounts impersonating New Horizon School, its departments or staff.
- Posts or messages targeting students, teachers or other members of the school community.
- Online bullying, harassment, threats, intimidation or humiliation.
- Unauthorised sharing of photographs, videos, recordings or personal information.



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- False or misleading allegations presented as factual claims.
- Content that may create a safeguarding concern.
- Other social media activity that violates school policy or creates a significant and identifiable risk or harm to the school community.

Important: The existence of an anonymous account, criticism of the school, disagreement with school decisions, or expression of an opinion does not by itself constitute misconduct.

3. Definitions

Social Media: Digital platforms and services through which users create, share, communicate or interact with content or other users.

Social Media Incident: Any social media activity or content that may disrupt the safe operation of the school community, harm an individual, create a safeguarding concern, violate school policy, or otherwise require school review.

Harmful Digital Conduct: Conduct such as personal insults, repeated humiliation, targeted harassment, bullying, deliberate circulation of harmful rumours or encouraging others to ridicule a student or staff member.

Security / Privacy Concern: Unauthorised access, disclosure or sharing of sensitive personal information, photographs, recordings or other private material.

Safeguarding / Legal Concern: A serious matter such as threats of violence, blackmail/extortion, sexual exploitation or sexualised content involving minors, non-consensual intimate material, serious intimidation, disclosure of highly sensitive personal information, or content indicating an immediate risk to a person.

Technology / Digital Evidence: Screenshots, screen recordings, URLs, account information, messages, posts, comments and other relevant digital material preserved for an investigation.

4. Policy Statement

New Horizon School recognises that students and staff live and communicate in a digital environment. The school respects responsible student expression while maintaining its responsibility to protect students, staff and the wider school community from bullying, harassment, threats, impersonation, privacy violations and other harmful digital conduct.

All social media concerns and incidents shall be handled with calmness, confidentiality, fairness, evidence-based investigation and proportionality. The school shall establish the facts before identifying or disciplining a student.

- Safety First – The immediate safety and well-being of students and staff shall be prioritised.
- Facts Before Conclusions – Decisions shall be based on verified information and a fair assessment of evidence.



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- Confidentiality – Information shall be shared only with persons who need it for investigation, safeguarding or other authorised school action.
- Proportionality – School action shall be proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the conduct.
- Fairness – Students shall have an opportunity to explain their involvement before a disciplinary conclusion is reached.
- No Public Confrontation – The school shall not publicly name, shame or accuse students in relation to an anonymous account or social media incident.
- No Retaliation – Genuine reporting, cooperation with an investigation and raising safety concerns shall not result in retaliation.

5. Reporting Procedures

5.1. Who to Report To

Any student, staff member or authorised person who becomes aware of a social media concern involving the school community should report it promptly to the Principal or designated senior administrator. Where appropriate, the matter may also be referred through the school's designated safeguarding or disciplinary reporting channel.

5.2. How to Report

- Report the concern promptly and provide the original information where possible.
- Avoid forwarding or circulating the material unnecessarily.
- Preserve relevant evidence, such as screenshots, screen recordings and links, where possible.
- Do not independently confront, accuse, threaten or publicly identify a suspected student.
- Do not attempt to obtain unauthorised access to an account.
- Do not ask a student to delete evidence before it has been preserved.

Where a verbal report is made, the designated officer shall ensure that the incident is documented in writing.

5.3. Information to Include

The report should include, where available:

- Date and time the content or account was observed.
- Account username and platform.
- Profile URL and, where relevant, post/story/comment/message URL.
- Nature and description of the content or concern.
- Person(s) apparently affected.
- Source from whom the information was received.
- Relevant screenshots or screen recordings.
- Any immediate action already taken.
- Any known safeguarding or safety concern.



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- Contact information of the person reporting, where applicable.

6. Incident Response

6.1. Initial Assessment

Upon receiving a report, the Principal or designated officer shall conduct an initial risk assessment and classify the matter as appropriate:

Category A — Opinion / Student Expression

Examples:

- Student criticism of school facilities
- Comments about school events
- Personal opinions about school policies
- General complaints without targeted abuse

Action: Monitor, understand the concern and, where appropriate, address the underlying issue through normal school communication.

Category B — Harmful Digital Conduct

Examples:

- Personal insults
- Repeated humiliation
- Targeted harassment
- Bullying
- Deliberate circulation of harmful rumours
- Encouraging others to ridicule a student or staff member

Action: Preserve evidence, investigate and follow the Student Code of Conduct.

Category C — Serious Safeguarding / Legal Concern

Examples:

- Threats of violence
- Blackmail or extortion
- Sexual exploitation or sexualised content involving minors
- Non-consensual intimate material
- Serious threats or intimidation
- Disclosure of highly sensitive personal information
- Content indicating an immediate risk to a student or another person

Action: Immediately inform the Principal and follow the school's safeguarding and escalation procedures. Where required, the matter shall be referred to the appropriate external authority.



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6.2. Investigation

For matters requiring investigation, the Principal may appoint an investigation team consisting of appropriate personnel such as the Principal, Junior Principal/Vice Principal, Counsellor, Academic Supervisor and/or designated safeguarding or discipline officer.

The investigation shall establish:

1. What was posted or communicated?
2. Who was affected?
3. Is the information a factual statement, opinion, allegation or rumour?
4. Does the content violate school policy?
5. Is there evidence connecting a student to the account or content?
6. Is the student an administrator, contributor or merely a follower?
7. Has the conduct been repeated?
8. Has any student or staff member been harmed or placed at risk?

Following an account, liking a post or receiving a confession does not by itself establish that a student created or published the content.

Student Meeting

Where there is reasonable evidence connecting a student to an account or content, the meeting shall be conducted privately with an appropriate second staff member present. The concern shall be explained factually, the student shall be allowed to respond, and the student's explanation shall be recorded accurately.

- Questions shall not be threatening, humiliating or leading.
- The school shall not demand passwords or attempt to access a student's private account.
- The school shall not ask students to delete evidence before it has been preserved.
- The investigator shall distinguish between confirmed facts, student statements, witness information and assumptions.

Suggested questions include:

9. Are you aware of this account?
10. What is your understanding of its purpose?
11. Have you ever contributed content to the account?
12. Have you administered or had access to the account?
13. Have you submitted any confession or message?
14. Have you shared any content from the account with others?
15. Do you know whether another student has been targeted?
16. Is there any information that you believe the school should know for someone's safety?
17. Is there anything you would like the school to understand before we proceed?



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6.3. Documentation

The designated investigator shall maintain a confidential Incident Evidence File and Social Media Incident Register. Evidence shall be stored securely and shall not be circulated among students or unnecessary staff.

The Incident Evidence File should record:

Item	Details
Account Username	
Platform	Instagram / Other
Profile URL	
Date & Time Observed	
Screenshot / Screen Recording	Yes / No
Post / Story / Comment / Message URL	
Nature of Concern	
Person(s) Affected	
Source of Information	
Action Taken	
Date Reported to Platform	
Follow-up Required	

The confidential Social Media Incident Register shall include:

- Incident number and date.
- Account/platform.
- Nature of concern and persons affected.
- Evidence available.
- Investigation status.
- Parent/guardian communication.
- Platform report.
- School action.
- Closure date.

7. Follow-up Actions

7.1. Resolution

Following the investigation, appropriate measures shall be taken based on the established facts and the seriousness of the matter.

Where no misconduct is established, the school may:

- Close the matter.
- Continue appropriate monitoring.
- Address any legitimate underlying concern through normal school channels.



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Where misconduct is established, action may include:

- Formal warning.
- Parent/guardian meeting.
- Behavioural undertaking.
- Counselling or education on digital citizenship.
- Restorative action where appropriate.
- Restrictions or disciplinary measures under the Student Code of Conduct.
- Further escalation for repeated or serious incidents.

Any disciplinary action must be consistent with the school's approved policies and applicable requirements.

7.2. Reporting to Authorities / Platforms

Where content appears to violate the relevant social media platform's policies, the school may report the specific account, post, comment, message or other content through the platform's reporting mechanisms. Examples include harassment/bullying, impersonation, privacy violations and threats.

The school shall retain, where available:

- Date of report.
- Content reported.
- Reason for report.
- Confirmation/reference number.
- Platform response.

If an incident involves illegal activity or a serious safeguarding or legal concern, the matter shall be referred to the appropriate external authority as required by law or school safeguarding procedures. The school shall not attempt to obtain unauthorised access to an account.

7.3. Communication

Parents/guardians shall be contacted where a student is reasonably identified as an administrator/contributor, a student is directly affected by harmful content, the matter involves bullying or safeguarding, school disciplinary action may be required, or continued monitoring/support is necessary.

Parent/guardian communication shall remain factual and confidential and should explain:

- What was observed.
- Why the matter requires attention.
- What has been established so far.
- That the school is reviewing the matter fairly.
- What support is available.
- What further action may be required.

The school should avoid stating an allegation as an established fact until the investigation is complete.



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An incident may be closed when the facts have been established as far as reasonably possible, immediate safeguarding concerns have been addressed, necessary parents/guardians have been informed, appropriate school action has been completed, platform reporting has been undertaken where appropriate, and any necessary follow-up date has been established.

8. Training and Awareness

New Horizon School shall provide appropriate awareness and training for staff and students on responsible social media use, digital citizenship and incident reporting.

- Students shall be encouraged to use social media responsibly and respectfully.
- Staff shall understand the reporting and evidence-preservation process.
- Staff and students shall be informed of the importance of protecting privacy and personal information.
- Relevant personnel shall be familiar with safeguarding escalation procedures.
- Training and awareness shall reinforce that legitimate expression and criticism are not automatically misconduct.

9. Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed annually or as necessary to ensure that it remains effective and aligned with the school's educational, safeguarding, disciplinary and legal requirements.

The Principal or designated responsible officer may initiate an earlier review following a significant incident, material change in school procedures, or change in applicable requirements.

10. Compliance and Enforcement

All students, staff and authorised personnel are expected to comply with this policy and with the school's Student Code of Conduct, safeguarding procedures and other applicable policies.

- Failure to comply with this policy may result in appropriate action in accordance with school policy.
- Disciplinary action shall be based on established facts and shall be proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the conduct.
- Students shall be given an opportunity to explain their involvement before a disciplinary conclusion is reached.
- The school shall not permit retaliation against a person who raises a genuine concern, reports harmful content or cooperates with an investigation.
- The school shall also not permit retaliation against an alleged account administrator, contributor or complainant.



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APPROVED BY

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Date: _____

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