

Social Media and Social Networking Policy 2026

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Table of Contents

Purpose.....	2
Scope.....	2
Legislation and Guidance.....	3
Roles & Responsibilities	3
Use of official school social media	3
Personal use of social media by staff	6
Personal use of social media by students	7
Personal use of social media by parents/carers.....	7
Monitoring of and Access to Social Media	8
Reporting.....	8
Training and Awareness.....	8
Monitoring and Review	9
Related Policies.....	9

Purpose

This policy aims to:

- set guidelines and rules for the use of the World Academy of Tirana's social media channels;
- establish clear expectations for the way members of the World Academy of Tirana community engage with each other online;
- support the school's safeguarding, online safety and data protection processes.

Scope

For the purposes of this document, social media and social networking are considered to include all technologies that allow individuals to communicate and share information, including photos and video. This includes group messaging services (such as WhatsApp) and online gaming platforms (such as Minecraft).

This policy applies to the use of social media for both business and personal purposes, whether during school/working hours or outside these times. It applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using:

- school IT equipment, facilities and networks;
- devices or equipment belonging to members of staff and students;
- any other IT/internet-enabled devices, equipment and networks.

All members of the school community should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, may be subject to copyright, safeguarding and data protection or other legislation.

- All members of the World Academy of Tirana community must operate in line with the school's policies, and all staff, academic or administrative, are required to read, understand and comply with this policy.

Legislation and Guidance

While breaches of this policy will be considered a serious conduct matter which may lead to disciplinary action being taken under the school's Behaviour and Disciplinary policies, inappropriate use of social media or social networking may also result in criminal liability under laws relating to:

- **confidentiality and privacy** (notably the Data Protection Act 2018, General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018 and **Law No. 124/2024 "On the Protection of Personal Data"- Albanian GDPR**)
- **equality** (including the Human Rights Act 1998, Equality Act 2010 and
- This policy is implemented in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, Law No. 10221/2010 "On Protection from Discrimination" (as amended), Law No. 9970/2008 "On Gender Equality in Society", Law No. 18/2017 "On the Rights and Protection of the Child", and other relevant Albanian legislation promoting equality, diversity, inclusion and human rights.
- **libel, defamation, harassment and breach of copyright** this policy should be read in conjunction with the Criminal Code of the Republic of Albania, Law No. 124/2024 "On the Protection of Personal Data", Law No. 10221/2010 "On Protection from Discrimination", and other applicable legislation relating to privacy, harassment, cyberbullying, intellectual property, child protection and online safety.

Roles & Responsibilities

Use of official school social media

The school's official social media channels are:

- **LinkedIn: World Academy Tirana**
- **Instagram: wat_worldacademyoftirana**
- **Facebook: World Academy Tirana**

These accounts are managed by Head of Admin and MAC team. Staff members who have not been authorised by **Principal/head of Admin** to manage, or post to, the account, must not access, or attempt to access, these accounts.

All social media posts must be considered for data protection compliance before publication (see **Data Protection Policy**). This includes ensuring no posting of images of students for whom appropriate permissions have not been obtained.

If any member of the school community has suggestions for something to appear on the school's social media channels, they should speak to **Head of Admin**.

- **Facebook**

The school will post on Facebook:

- alerts about changes (e.g., changes to procedures, severe weather updates, staffing changes);
- reminders (e.g., approaching deadlines, events or class activities, reminders about policies/procedures);
- advertisements for school events or activities;
- job vacancies or requests for volunteers;
- links to newsletters, guidance and factsheets for parents/carers;
- achievements of students and staff;
- photos or posts about school trips, events and activities;
- seasonal greetings and messages about religious festivals;
- invitations to provide feedback.

The school **will not** post on Facebook:

- names and photos of individuals unless they have given consent;
- harmful or abusive comments;
- messages to specific people;
- political statements;
- advertisements for businesses unless directly related to the school;
- links to staff members' personal account;
- surveys that reveal personal information about individuals;
- the sale of goods for commercial gain.

• **Instagram**

The school posts on Instagram:

- alerts about changes (e.g., changes to procedures, severe weather updates, staffing changes);
- reminders (e.g., approaching deadlines, events or class activities, reminders about policies/procedures);
- advertisements for school events or activities;
- job vacancies or requests for volunteers;
- links to newsletters, guidance and factsheets for parents/carers;
- achievements of students and staff;
- photos or posts about school trips, events and activities;
- seasonal greetings and messages about religious festivals;
- invitations to provide feedback.
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The school **will not** post on Instagram:

- names and photos of individuals unless they have given consent;
- harmful or abusive comments;
- messages to specific people;
- political statements;
- advertisements for businesses unless directly related to the school;
- links to staff members' personal account;
- surveys that reveal personal information about individuals;

- the sale of goods for commercial gain.

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• **LinkedIn**

The school posts on LinkedIn:

- alerts about changes (e.g., changes to procedures, severe weather updates, staffing changes);
- reminders (e.g., approaching deadlines, events or class activities, reminders about policies/procedures);
- advertisements for school events or activities;
- job vacancies or requests for volunteers;
- links to newsletters, guidance and factsheets for parents/carers;
- achievements of students and staff;
- photos or posts about school trips, events and activities;
- seasonal greetings and messages about religious festivals;
- invitations to provide feedback.

The school **will not** post on LinkedIn:

- names and photos of individuals unless they have given consent;
- harmful or abusive comments;
- messages to specific people;
- political statements;
- advertisements for businesses unless directly related to the school;
- links to staff members' personal account;
- surveys that reveal personal information about individuals;
- the sale of goods for commercial gain.

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• **Youtube**

The school posts on Youtube:

- alerts about changes (e.g., changes to procedures, severe weather updates, staffing changes);
- reminders (e.g., approaching deadlines, events or class activities, reminders about policies/procedures);
- advertisements for school events or activities;
- job vacancies or requests for volunteers;
- links to newsletters, guidance and factsheets for parents/carers;
- achievements of students and staff;
- photos or posts about school trips, events and activities;
- seasonal greetings and messages about religious festivals;
- invitations to provide feedback.

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The school **will not** post on **Youtube**:

- names and photos of individuals unless they have given consent;
- harmful or abusive comments;

- messages to specific people;
- political statements;
- advertisements for businesses unless directly related to the school;
- links to staff members' personal account;
- surveys that reveal personal information about individuals;
- the sale of goods for commercial gain.

• **Moderation**

Staff responsible for our social media accounts will ensure that all content shared on our school social media channels is age-appropriate for the school community.

Staff responsible for our school social media accounts will, as soon as reasonably possible, delete any:

- false or misleading comments;
- offensive, abusive or inflammatory comments;
- comments we consider to be spam;
- personal information, such as telephone numbers, address details, etc.;
- posts that advertise commercial activity or ask for donations;
- surveys that have not been approved, as data privacy rights and personal data handling measures may not have been considered or made clear.

Every reasonable effort will be taken to politely address concerns or behaviour of individual users, following the school's Concerns and Complaints Policy. If users are repeatedly abusive or inappropriate, they will be blocked.

• **Following other social media users**

The school:

- will only 'like' Facebook pages with a non-commercial interest. Being 'liked' by the school does not imply endorsement of any kind;
- add for Instagram or other platforms in use by the school.

Personal use of social media by staff

The school expects all staff (including the Board and volunteers) to consider the safety of students and the reputational and financial risks to the school when using social media channels, including when doing so in a personal capacity.

Staff are responsible for checking and maintaining appropriate privacy and security settings of their personal social media accounts.

Staff members must report any safeguarding issues they become aware of.

When using social media, staff must not:

- use personal accounts to conduct school business;
- accept 'friend requests' from, or communicate with, present students;
- reference or share information about individual students, colleagues or parents/carers;
- complain about the school, individual students, colleagues or parents/carers;
- post images of students;
- express personal views or opinions that could be interpreted as those of the school;
- link their social media profile to their work email account;

- use personal social media during timetabled teaching time **except in a professional capacity**;
- share personal information such as telephone numbers, addresses, birthdays, etc.

All communications between staff and parents or students must take place via official school channels.

Any communication received from current students (unless they are family members) on any personal social media accounts must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately, and will be shared with the senior leadership team.

Staff are strongly advised not to have contact via personal accounts with past students. If ongoing communication is required, this should be via official school channels.

Any concerns regarding a member of staff's personal use of social media will be dealt with in line with the **Staff Code of Conduct**.

Personal use of social media by students

The school encourages students to:

- be respectful towards the school, members of staff, other students and parents/ carers at all times;
- direct any concerns or complaints through the school's official channels, so they can be dealt with in line with the school's behaviour or complaints procedures.

Students should not use social media to:

- complain about the school or bring the school into disrepute;
- complain about individual members of staff or other students;
- make inappropriate comments about members of staff, other students or parents/carers;
- post images and/or audio, including those generated by AI, of staff or other students without their permission.

Any concerns about a student's social media use will be dealt with in line with the school's Behaviour and Online Safety policies.

Personal use of social media by parents/carers

The school expects parents/carers to help us model safe, responsible and appropriate social media use for our students.

When communicating with the school via official communication channels, or using private/independent channels to talk about the school, parents and carers should:

- be respectful towards, and about, members of staff and the school at all times;
- be respectful of, and about, other parents/carers and other students and children;
- direct any concerns or complaints through the school's official channels, so they can be dealt with in line with the school's Concerns and Complaints Policy.

Parents/carers should not use social media to:

- complain about the school;
- complain about individual members of staff, students or other parents/carers;
- make inappropriate comments about members of staff, students or other parents/carers;
- draw attention to, or discuss, behaviour incidents;
- post images of children other than their own.

Every reasonable effort will be taken to politely address concerns or behaviour of individual users, in line with the school's Concerns and Complaints Policy. However, if users are repeatedly abusive or

post inappropriate content that affects the school's community and policies, the school will take every measure to ensure they are blocked by the designated moderator.

WhatsApp and similar messaging platforms can provide quick and effective communication among groups, such as parents in a class. Parents/carers should follow the same social media guidelines (above) when using WhatsApp groups.

Monitoring of and Access to Social Media

World Academy of Tirana reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review any and all activities using the school's IT resources and communications systems, including social media postings and messaging. This includes ascertaining and demonstrating that expected standards are being met by those using the systems, and the detection and investigation of improper or unauthorised use of the systems (especially where this is necessary to prevent or detect criminal activity).

By using the school's IT resources and facilities, all members of the **World Academy of Tirana** community and other visitors give the school consent to monitor their activities. All should be aware that their use of social media and any information published by them may be monitored and reviewed.

World Academy of Tirana reserves the right to disable social media traffic on key networks within the school, such as wi-fi and wired networks used for teaching, where the use of social networking is not appropriate.

Reporting

Concerns about breaches of this policy should be sent to the Principal. Details of the investigation process and potential outcomes are set out in the Online Safety Policy.

Training and Awareness

All staff receive regular online safety training, which includes the use and risks of social media, as part of their CPD and mandatory training plan. New staff receive online safety training, which includes the use of social media, as part of their induction, completed within the first 3 weeks. To support students and parents, the school will raise awareness about the appropriate use and potential risks of social media, and provide regular information through:

- curriculum-linked activities
- communications (e.g. letters, newsletters, website, learning platform)
- parent sessions, workshops and events
- campaigns (e.g. Safer Internet Day)
- signposting to trusted resources (e.g. saferinternet.org.uk, childnet.com)
- providing information and resources to support online safety at home

Monitoring and Review

Working with the **IT Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead**, the Principal will monitor the implementation of this policy, and ensure it is updated to reflect the needs and circumstances of the school and the social media channels and tools available to users.

This policy will be reviewed each year.

On behalf of the Board, the Regional Head of Schools is responsible for approving this policy.

Related Policies

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

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Acceptable Use of IT, Online Safety and Mobile Phone policies
- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies
- Staff Behaviour/Code of Conduct
- Data Protection Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy