



Social Media Policy

OVERVIEW

Purpose	The purpose of this policy is to communicate the School's position and rules in respect of Social Media engagement of students enrolled with the school.
Custodian	St Stithians Online School Head & Rector of St Stithians College
Approval Authority	Rector of St Stithians College
Version History	Version 1, Effective 24 May 2021



1. Definitions

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

- 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. speech that discriminates based on any individual characteristic including but not limited to gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity etc;
 - 1.1.2. explicit or pornographic images or content of any type including suggestive content relating to a minor;
 - 1.1.3. content that is graphic, violent or otherwise offensive;
 - 1.1.4. defamatory content;
 - 1.1.5. content that is harassing or threatening and could cause someone physical, mental or emotional harm;
 - 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);
 - 1.1.7. any content that discloses private information about our school, students or our staff;
 - 1.1.8. any content that may be used for unlawful purposes, or that aims to assist with unlawful conduct;
 - 1.1.9. any content that does not belong to you; (i.e. is someone else’s intellectual property); and
 - 1.1.10. any content that is fraudulent or untrue.
- 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;



- 1.3. **“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”;
- 1.4. **“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;
- 1.5. **“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 you associate yourself 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 a WhatsApp group that you are a part of or comments that occur on a post that you created- even if you did not make the content yourself;
- 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, WhatsApp, TikTok, Twitch, 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 St Stithian Online School’s Student Code of Conduct.
- 2.2. Any transgressions of this Policy will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures detailed in the Student Code of Conduct.



3. Introduction, Purpose and Scope

- 3.1. The School 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. The School has a duty to protect all its students and staff from these risks.
- 3.2. As we do not want the risks of Social Media to prevent you from utilising the same for your own benefit, we have compiled this Social Media Policy for all students to set out what is expected of you when using Social Media
- 3.3. The purpose of this Policy is to govern the use by our students of any Social Media platforms in any communications, whether these platforms are enabled by St Stithians Online School or by third parties, and whether the communications are regarding St Stithians Online School or otherwise.
- 3.4. In addition to the terms of this Policy, by accepting the same you agree to also adhere to all of the Terms and Conditions laid out by the Social Media platforms that you use, as well as the laws of the Republic of South Africa.

4. Rules regarding participation in Social Media

4.1. General

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



- 4.1.2. As a result, we ask that students not do anything on Social Media that may bring the name of The School and / or Valenture Institute into disrepute, and we ask that you act in the best interests of both.
- 4.1.3. You also have a legal duty to ensure that all of your communications on Social Media are lawful, do not cause harm and do not infringe on other peoples' rights.
- 4.1.4. You are reasonably identifiable as students at St Stithians Online School when interacting on Social Media platforms and as a result, the School and / or Valenture Institute may be linked with any information, comments and submissions that are shared or made by you on Social Media platforms and can suffer damages as a result of same.
- 4.1.5. As a result of the above, the School asks its 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. you may not Publish anything on Social Media that constitutes Banned Content (see page 1);
- 4.2.2. you may not Publish anything that is contrary to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa;
- 4.2.3. you may not Publish anything that is in any way derogatory of St Stithians Online School and / or Valenture Institute, it's students, staff, parents and/or affiliates;
- 4.2.4. remember, when interacting on Social Media, that you are acting as an ambassador of the School, as you are reasonably identifiable as a student at our school;
- 4.2.5. you may not air your internal grievances regarding St Stithians Online School and / or Valenture Institute, it's students, staff, parents and/or affiliates online; when on Social Media, you are



expected, at all times to prioritise the privacy and confidentiality of all of its staff, students and other parents;

- 4.2.6. you may not Publish any other individual's personal information (including in videos, images, photographs or messages of or from them) without their express permission;
- 4.2.7. you may not falsify an account or profile or assume a false identity at all on Social Media;
- 4.2.8. St Stithians Online School and Valentre Institute retain the right to examine the Social Media accounts (if accessible) of any individual associated with the school;
- 4.2.9. any Social Media groups or chats, which are to be set up only for the purposes of constructive communication, must be monitored by a Teacher, Mentor, Facilitator 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 you become aware of a discussion, posting, comment or misrepresentation on Social Media that needs to be brought to the attention of the School and/or has the potential to impact on the reputation of an individual associated with the School or Valentre as a whole, you are required to immediately notify a member of staff. (This notification should, if possible, be accompanied by a screenshot of, and a link to the relevant content.).