

**DAINFERN COLLEGE STUDENT POLICY**

**SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY: STUDENTS**

<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b>	1 April 2026	<b>DATE OF LAST REVISION</b>	N/A	<b>VERSION :</b>	April 2026
<b>POLICY OWNER</b>	Communication & Compliance Manager		<b>ADMINISTRATOR RESPONSIBLE</b>	Communication & Compliance Manager	
<b>RATIFICATION LEVEL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEC</li> </ul>				
<b>APPLIES TO</b>					
<b>STAFF</b>		<b>ACADEMIC STAFF</b>		<b>STUDENTS</b>	X
<b>PARENTS</b>		<b>VISITORS</b>		<b>CONTRACTORS</b>	

**RELATED POLICIES & DOCUMENTS**

- High School Code of Conduct
- Preparatory School Code of Conduct
- Student Acceptable Use Policy

**SPECIFIC TERMS & DEFINITIONS**

TERM	DEFINITION

**VERSION HISTORY**

VERSION	APPROVED BY	REVISION DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE	AUTHOR
March 2026	CEC	N/A	New Policy	J Pettitt

## Dainfern College Student Social Media Policy

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. **Dainfern College** (“**the College**”) recognises that social media is a valuable tool for both communication and education purposes. The College wants all students to benefit from the opportunities social media offers. However, if not used responsibly, social media poses certain risks.
- 1.2. The College respects the rights of all students to freedom of expression but at the same time, has an obligation to protect its staff, employees, parents and guardians, students, its image and its confidential information from any potential risks.
- 1.3. With this in mind, this Policy regulates students’ participation on social media, by providing guidelines as to what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable use of these platforms. The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that students’ use of social media does not compromise the reputation of the School and its stakeholders.

### 2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to all students at the College and to social media used in both a personal capacity as well as in relation to/association with the College.

### 3. Definitions

- 3.1. “**Adult**” refers to a parent or guardian, teacher and/or staff member.
- 3.2. “**College**” refers to **Dainfern College**.
- 3.3. “**Social media**” refers to any facility that enables conversations over the Internet including blogs, forums, platforms such as Facebook, Google Classroom, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Tik Tok, WhatsApp, YouTube, Discord, X (Twitter), Gaming platforms (including games on X-box and PlayStation etc) and any other forms of communication now or in the future classified or generally regarded as social media.
- 3.4. “**You/you**” and “**Your/your**” refers to students enrolled at Dainfern College.

### 4. Important Social Media Principles

- 4.1. The following are important principles that students must keep in mind when using social media:

- 4.1.1. **Students at the College can be linked to the College, even if they do not list the College as their own College anywhere online.**

*Example:*

*A student’s friends on social media could be mainly students of the College or a student could be tagged in photos of a College event.*

**This means that this Social Media Policy, and other applicable policies, applies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (including College holidays), as all individuals associated with the College serve as representatives of the College at all times.**

- 4.1.2. “**Digital content is dangerous content.**” – As soon as content exists in a digital format (i.e. as a photo or typed note), it is at risk of being distributed and seen by many other people. Even if content is not posted online, phones can be stolen, images are backed up to the Cloud (which may get hacked), and screenshots can be taken. As a result of this, all digital content is vulnerable. Content that is sent to someone or posted is especially vulnerable as it is out of the creator’s control.
- 4.1.3. **Content on social media is “published” content.** – As soon as one other person has seen your content on social media (and WhatsApp is a form of social media), in the eyes of the law, that content is regarded as “published” content. This means that you are as responsible for it as the journalist who puts the headline on the front page of the newspaper.
- 4.1.4. **It is a permanent record.** – Everything you put online is there to stay. Even if the content is deleted shortly after it is posted online, screenshots mean that your content can be distributed to people who you might not want to receive it.

- 4.1.5. **You are never anonymous online.** – Even if you use social media under a fake account it is easy to trace the identity and location of an account holder using an IP address.
- 4.1.6. **It is not private.** – There really is no such thing as “private” on social media. Be very careful with posting any personal information that you would not want the public to see. Be particularly mindful of sharing information such as full dates of birth and current locations.
- 4.1.7. **Chain of publication.** – Remember that even if you did not create the content, in terms of South African law, **you could be held responsible for any content that you retweet, share, like or are tagged in on social media, once you become aware of it and if you have the ability to disassociate yourself from that content, for example, by un-tagging yourself. Any comments appearing on your posts are also your responsibility.** If you are in a WhatsApp Group, you could potentially also be responsible for content on that group posted by other people (not just the content you posted yourself), if you do not disassociate yourself from that content by either leaving the group or voicing your objection.
- 4.1.8. **Do not complain about the College on social media.** – If you are unhappy at any time about any matter related to the College, it is your responsibility to raise your concerns **through the appropriate channels.** Turning to social media to air your concerns around the College is not appropriate and is in breach of this policy.
- 4.1.9. **If you post something bad about someone or about the College but do not mention the name, it does not mean you will not get into trouble for that post.** – If you say something bad about someone or about the College, you do not have to mention a person or organisation by name for the purposes of the offence of defamation or *crimen injuria* (infringement of dignity). If it is possible to “guess” who you are referring to, you are as guilty/liable as if you had mentioned the name.
- 4.1.10. **Context and tone.** – Be aware of the tone of your online communication and remember that what means one thing to you, could have a totally different meaning to someone else. Context is often unclear online. Emoticons can sometimes clarify context and tone but can sometimes cause offence or confusion, so use them wisely.
- 4.1.11. **You have the right to freedom of expression, but you cannot infringe on other people’s rights unfairly, for example, someone else’s right to a good reputation, dignity or privacy.** – Before you post something on social media, think about the impact that it could have on the College, its employees, parents, your fellow students and the general public. If in doubt, either give it some time and reconsider it at a later stage, or simply do not post it.

## 5. Appropriate Use of Social Media

- 5.1. To ensure you use social media well, you are expected to adhere to the following practices of good digital citizenship:
  - 5.1.1. You must abide by all of the terms and conditions for the social media platforms and facilities that you are using. Be expressly aware of the age restrictions and the consequences of falsifying your age.
  - 5.1.2. Do not give or post your name, date of birth, address, telephone number, or the name, address or telephone number of the College or your parents/guardians, to anyone online.
  - 5.1.3. Be sure to deactivate location tags for all social media applications so that your location is not made available to anyone (except tracking apps such as Life360).
  - 5.1.4. Do not take or send embarrassing photos, videos or images of your family, friends or classmates to others, unless you have their consent.
  - 5.1.5. Do not say unkind or untrue things about people or use inappropriate language online.
  - 5.1.6. If you have posted a photo or video of someone else or content which concerns someone else, and that person asks you to remove it, you need to do so immediately.
  - 5.1.7. Do not distribute chain mail and/or fake news. Use available resources to find out if something is true or not.
  - 5.1.8. Do not message, phone, “add” or meet anyone that you have not met face-to-face in real life unless an adult you know and trust says it is okay.

- 5.1.9. Often, people online pretend to be someone they're not. Even if you have an overlap in friends, or your friends introduce you to someone online, always be careful in establishing that they really are who they say they are.
- 5.1.10. **Immediately tell an adult if:**
  - 5.1.10.1. You receive suspicious phone calls or messages from people you do not know;
  - 5.1.10.2. You receive harassing, threatening, disturbing, offensive, illegal or inappropriate content;
  - 5.1.10.3. You receive any content, or you are part of any conversation (even if you started it) which makes you feel uncomfortable, unsafe, nervous or unsettled.
  - 5.1.10.4. If someone is using your image to cause you harm – such as creating stickers or memes of you.
  - 5.1.10.5. If someone has used AI tools to cause you harm – such as creating deep fakes.
  - 5.1.10.6. If someone sends you any inappropriate or pornographic material. In such an instance you must not show it or send it to your friends, as this could be a criminal offence.
  - 5.1.10.7. If someone asks you to send them any pornographic material or naked pictures. In such an instance **you must always refuse to send the photographs**, as this could be a criminal offence.
  - 5.1.10.8. If someone is trying to blackmail or extort you.
  - 5.1.10.9. If you see people doing things or saying things to other people online that you know they are not supposed to do or say.
- 5.1.11. Do not get into arguments or fights online. If someone tries to start an argument or fight with you, do not answer him or her, and do tell an adult you know and trust.
- 5.1.12. Do not bully, shame, threaten or harass anyone or send threatening or hurtful messages to others online.
- 5.1.13. Never create a fake account or pretend to be someone else online.
- 5.1.14. Never give your passwords to anyone but your parents/guardians. Have two-factor authentication on every account.
- 5.1.15. Never use somebody else's phone or log into somebody else's account, even if you have their permission.
- 5.1.16. Do not use something that you found online or created using AI tools such as ChatGPT and pretend that it is yours.
- 5.1.17. Do not download, buy or order anything online without asking an adult first.
- 5.1.18. Do not open any suspicious links or attachments.
- 5.1.19. You may only use the College logo if you have **written permission** from the Executive Head, your Principal, the Director of Technology or the Communication & Compliance Manager at Dainfern College to do so.
- 5.1.20. You may not create accounts that appear to belong to the College, without written permission from the Executive Head, your Principal, the Director of Technology or the Communication & Compliance Manager at Dainfern College.

## 6. Guidelines for College WhatsApp and Google Chat Groups

- 6.1. The College recognises that many students are part of WhatsApp and/or Google Chat groups that have been established by the College and/or College students for the purpose of providing a communication channel to discuss College-related matters ("the **Group/s**"). The following guidelines are to be followed when engaging in any communication on the Groups.
  - 6.1.1. **College business only.** - All content on **Official Dainfern College WhatsApp/Google Chat groups** must relate to College-related issues only. There must be no unrelated memes, jokes or social issues discussed on the Official College WhatsApp/Google Chat Groups.
  - 6.1.2. **Deliberately excluding or removing students from the Groups.** – Groups may not be used to deliberately exclude or alienate anyone that you may not like, either for fun or to hurt them. Continuing to participate in Groups that do this can make you an accomplice to that behaviour.

- 6.1.3. **Distance yourself from inappropriate content.** – If you are in a Group where other people are doing or saying inappropriate, hurtful or offensive things, you should take a stand against the inappropriate content by either leaving the group, or letting others know that what they are doing is not right. History on Dainfern College Google Chat is activated by the school so that there is a record of all communication on these channels.
- 6.1.4. If you are the **administrator** of the Group, you have the ability to delete any content sent on the Group which makes you legally responsible for content that remains on the group.
- 6.1.5. **Only reply if necessary** - If a message does not require a response, please do not respond. The volume of messages on these groups can be overwhelming. You do not need to acknowledge receipt unless specifically asked to do so.
- 6.1.6. **Long conversations, especially if only involving a few members of the Group, are to be taken off the Group.**
- 6.1.7. **Don't abuse emojis.** – There are some like this 😊 or 😬 that don't require explanation, but others like this 🙄 that can be interpreted in different ways and generate confusion. Use with caution as emojis can be legally binding.
- 6.1.8. **Respect staff boundaries.** – Our staff are always available to help but do appreciate a break too. Please do not contact them on the Groups outside of College hours unless absolutely necessary.
- 6.1.9. Before sharing any content, especially in Group environments, ask yourself:
  - Is it necessary?
  - Is it appropriate for the audience?
  - Is now a good time?

## 7. Disciplinary Consequences

- 7.1 This Policy is subject to Dainfern College's Codes of Conduct, and Disciplinary Procedures.
- 7.2 If you become aware of a discussion, post, comment or misrepresentation on social media that needs to be brought to the attention of Dainfern College and/or has the potential to impact the reputation of the College or of someone associated with the College, you must immediately tell a member of staff. If possible, you should include a screenshot of, and/or a link to the relevant content.
- 7.3 Any transgressions of this Policy will be dealt with in accordance with the Dainfern College Codes of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

### ADVICE TO STUDENTS

***When you are unsure whether you should post content online, or have it on your phone, remember the following:***

- **The Billboard Test:** If you wouldn't want the photo/video/messages to be on a huge billboard on the side of a highway with your name and the name of the College, do not post it online and do not let it exist in digital format on your own phone/device or somebody else's phone/device (as these can get stolen/hacked).
- **The 6 Ps:** If you would not want any of the following people to see the photos/videos or messages, do not post them on social media or let them exist in your phone/device:
  - *The Police*
  - *Your Parents or Guardians*
  - *A Paedophile or Predator*
  - *A Prospective university admissions officer/ employer/scholarship provider*
  - *Your Principal*
  - *A Phisher (someone who is interested in getting your personal information)*