Social Media Policy

Introduction

Richlands Christian Academy recognizes that access to technology in school gives students, parents, and teachers greater opportunities to learn, engage, communicate, and develop skills that will prepare them for work, life, and citizenship. Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are now widely used. This type of media allows us to communicate in ways that were not previously possible. And we are committed to helping our students develop 21st-century technology and communication skills. However, such sites can be inappropriately used by some as a means of expressing negative or offensive views about schools and their staff.

To that end, this **Acceptable Use Policy** outlines the guidelines and behaviors that users are expected to follow when using school technologies or when using personally-owned devices. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Set expectations for students, parents, and teachers to follow. Example: the same rules for good behavior and respectful conduct online as offline are expected.
- Encourage social networking sites to be used in a beneficial and positive way by parents and students.
- Safeguard students, staff, and anyone associated with the school from the negative effects of social networking sites.
- Safeguard the reputation of the school from unwarranted abuse on social networking sites.
- Forewarn that the misuse of social media can result in disciplinary action.
- Express that the Richlands Christian Academy makes a reasonable effort to ensure students' safety and security online, but will not be held accountable for any harm or damages that result from misuse of social media technologies.

While social networking is fun and valuable, there are some risks you should keep in mind when using these tools. In the social media world, the lines are blurred between what is public or private, personal or professional.

We've created these social networking/media guidelines for you to follow when representing the school in the virtual world.

Please do the following:

Use good judgment

- We expect you to use good judgment in all situations.
- You must know and follow the school's Online Code of Conduct and Privacy Policy.
- Regardless of your privacy settings, assume that all of the information you have shared on your social network is public information.

Be respectful

- Always treat others in a respectful, positive, and considerate manner.
- Demonstrate courtesy and respect for staff, other parents, and pupils when comments are placed on social networking sites.
- Use appropriate language when discussing the school.

Be responsible and ethical

- Please refrain from using the social media platform as a means to "vent" or "let out your frustrations" concerning the school or anything pertaining to the school, its staff, students, and curriculum. If a problem arises or if there is a situation that needs to be addressed, we kindly ask that you contact the school staff directly. We promise to address and resolve the situation in a responsible and private manner.

- Do not use social networking sites to make derogatory comments or post photographs which could bring staff or students into disrepute, including making comments about pupils, parents, and other staff members.

- Keep in mind that one of the biggest avenues of social media is that it not only gives others another way to talk to you, but it also gives them another way to talk about you, your child, and our school. We understand that social media is not some fad that will eventually fade away, therefore, we ask that you work with us so that it doesn't become the school's gossip column.

- Users should also remember **not to post anything online that they would not want parents, teachers, or future colleges or employers to see**. Once something is online, it's out there—and can sometimes be shared and spread in ways you never intended.

Don't share the following:

Confidential information

- Do not publish, post, or release school information that is considered confidential or not public. If it seems confidential, it probably is. Online "conversations" are never private.

Please be cautious with respect to:

Images

- Respect brand, trademark, copyright information and/or images of the school (if applicable).
- You may use photos and video (products, etc.) that are available on the school's website.
- It is generally not acceptable to post pictures of students without the expressed written consent of their parents.

Our promise to parents is:

- We will meet with you to resolve all concerns, and we will work hard to resolve them in a respectful and private manner.
- We will never conduct school business or discuss school concerns through social networking sites.
- We will act in the best interest of the whole community and honor our duty to take care of our students.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying will not be tolerated. Harassing, dissing, flaming, denigrating, impersonating, outing, tricking, excluding, and cyberstalking are all examples of cyberbullying. Don't be mean. Don't send emails or post comments with the intent of scaring, hurting, or intimidating someone else.

Engaging in these behaviors, or any online activities intended to harm (physically or emotionally) another person, will result in severe disciplinary action and loss of privileges. In some cases, cyberbullying can be a crime. Remember that your activities are monitored and retained by others.

Examples of Acceptable Use

I will:

- Follow the same guidelines for respectful, responsible behavior online that I am expected to follow offline.
- Treat social media carefully, and alert school staff if any problem is noted.
- Encourage positive, constructive discussion when using social media to promote the school.
- Alert a teacher or other staff member if I see threatening/bullying, inappropriate, or harmful content (images, messages, posts) online.
- Be cautious to protect the safety of myself and others.
- This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Users should use their own good judgment when using social media

Examples of Unacceptable Use

I will **not**:

- Use social media in a way that could be personally or physically harmful to myself or others.
- Engage in cyberbullying, harassment, or disrespectful conduct toward others–staff or students.
- Use social media as a gossip forum – to discuss problems or situations that have occurred at the school.

- Use language online that would be unacceptable in the classroom.
- Send pictures or videos to others with inappropriate images or topics.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Users should use their own good judgment when using social media.

Violations of this Acceptable Use Policy

Violations of this policy may have disciplinary repercussions, including:

- Suspension of privileges
- Suspension from school
- Removal of student from Richlands Christian Academy.
- Additional consequences determined by Administration.

The following form must be signed by both the parent(s) and the student(s) and returned to the school staff within the first week of school.

I have read and understood the **Social Media Acceptable Use Policy of the Richlands Christian Academy**, adopted in July 2017, and revised in July of 2024, and agree to abide by it:

_____

(Parent/Guardian's Printed Name)

_____

(Signature)

_____

(Date)

_____

(Student's Printed Name)

_____

(Signature)

_____

(Date)