

Thornton Primary School



Social Media Policy 2024

Thornton Primary School Social Media Policy

1. Purpose

This Social Media Policy is designed to guide the responsible use of social media by learners, teachers and staff at Thornton Primary School. It aims to protect the privacy, safety and well-being of all members of the school community and ensure compliance with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) and other relevant legislation.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all learners, teachers, staff and any other individuals associated with Thornton Primary School who use social media platforms in a personal or professional capacity.

3. Definitions

- **Social Media:** Platforms that allow users to create, share and interact with content online, including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok and YouTube.
- **Personal Information:** Any information that identifies or can be used to identify an individual, including names, contact details, photographs and other personal data.

4. General Guidelines

- **Privacy and Confidentiality:**
 - Do not share personal information about students, teachers or other staff members online. This includes full names, addresses, phone numbers and any other identifying details.
 - Adhere to POPIA by ensuring that any personal information shared is done with consent and in a manner that protects individuals' privacy.
- **Respect and Conduct:**
 - Maintain respectful and professional interactions on social media. Avoid language or behaviour that could be deemed offensive, discriminatory or inappropriate.
 - All social media interactions should uphold the values and standards of Thornton Primary School.
- **Content Sharing:**
 - Obtain written consent from parents or guardians before posting any images, videos or other content involving students. Ensure that consent forms are kept on file.
 - Verify that content shared about school events, activities or students is accurate and respectful.

5. Learners

- **Supervised Use:**
 - Learners should use social media under the guidance and supervision of their parents or guardians. The school provides resources and advice on safe and responsible social media use.
- **School Accounts:**
 - Learners are not permitted to create or use official school-related social media accounts without prior authorisation from the school administration.
- **Reporting Issues:**
 - Learners should immediately report any misuse, abuse or inappropriate content encountered online to a teacher.

6. Teachers and Staff

- **Professional Use:**
 - Maintain a clear distinction between personal and professional social media accounts. Avoid discussing school-related matters or sharing school-related content on personal social media accounts.
- **Educational Purpose:**
 - Use social media for educational purposes in line with the school's curriculum and guidelines. Ensure that all content shared is appropriate and aligns with Thornton Primary School's values.
- **Communication with Students:**
 - Official communication with students should occur through designated school communication channels. Personal social media accounts should not be used for direct interactions with learners.

7. POPIA Compliance

- **Personal Information Handling:**
 - Comply with POPIA by handling personal information responsibly. Ensure that any collection, storage and sharing of personal information is done with the necessary consent and in accordance with legal requirements.
 - Implement appropriate security measures to protect personal information from unauthorized access, loss or damage.
- **Data Protection:**
 - Personal data shared on social media must be handled with care. Ensure that any information posted is not in breach of individuals' rights to privacy and is used only for its intended purpose.
- **Consent:**
 - Obtain explicit consent from individuals before using their personal information or images in any social media content. Provide individuals with the option to withdraw consent at any time.

8. Monitoring and Compliance

- **Monitoring:**
 - The school may monitor social media accounts associated with official school activities or communication to ensure adherence to this policy and to protect the school community.
- **Reporting Violations:**
 - Report any breaches of this policy or concerns related to social media use to the school principal or designated social media coordinator. The school will investigate and address such issues promptly.
- **Disciplinary Action:**
 - Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, which could include counselling, warnings or other measures in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedures.

9. Training and Awareness

- **Training:**
 - The school will provide training and resources on responsible social media use, including understanding digital footprints, online safety and compliance with POPIA.
- **Awareness:**

- Regular updates and reminders about this policy will be communicated to ensure ongoing awareness and adherence.

10. Review and Amendments

- **Policy Review:**
 - This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in technology, legislation and best practices.
- **Feedback:**
 - Feedback on this policy can be submitted to the school administration for consideration during the review process.

Thornton Primary School is committed to ensuring a safe and respectful online environment for all members of our school community. Adherence to this Social Media Policy helps us protect our students and staff while making the most of the opportunities that social media offers.

