



# THE KNIGHT'S ACADEMY OF DANCE

## *Social Media Policy*

**Last reviewed: September 2019**

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and/or following any updates to national and local guidance and procedures



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## *Social Media Policy*

### *Policy statement*

At The Knight's Academy of Dance (***the dance school***), we are proud to provide a safe, stimulating and inclusive learning environment where every member of our community is valued and respected. The principles set out in this policy are designed to ensure that the use of social media is undertaken responsibly and that the confidentiality of students and staff and the reputation of the dance school are safeguarded. Social media and digital platforms are evolving quickly. At the dance school, we intend to observe the best possible practice in this digital environment, seeking to negotiate it wisely and with integrity for purposes of information, communication and PR.

### *Objectives*

The purpose of this policy is to:

- encourage social media to be used in a beneficial and positive way by all stakeholders;
- safeguard students, staff and anyone associated with the dance school from the negative effects of social media;
- safeguard the reputation of the dance school from unwarranted abuse on social media; and
- set out the action the dance school will consider taking if social media is used inappropriately.

### *Expectations*

The expectations regarding safe and responsible use of social media applies to all members of the dance school community. The term social media may include (but is not limited to) blogs, wikis, social networking sites, forums, bulletin boards, online gaming, apps, video/photo sharing sites, chat rooms and instant messenger.

All members of the dance school community are expected to engage in social media in a positive and responsible manner. They are advised not to post or share content that may be considered threatening, hurtful or defamatory to others on any social media service.

Concerns regarding the online conduct of any member of the dance school community on social media, must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (***DSL***), Stacey Knight, and be managed in accordance with our anti-bullying, allegations against staff, behaviour and child protection policies.

### *Staffs personal use of social media*

All members of staff at the dance school have a responsibility to ensure that they protect both their professional reputation and that of the dance school by treating colleagues and members of our dancing community with professionalism and respect. They should be protected from allegations and misinterpretations which can arise from the use of social networking sites.



The safe and responsible use of social media sites will be discussed with all members of staff as part of our staff induction and will be revisited and communicated via regular staff training opportunities.

Safe and professional behaviour will be outlined for all members of staff, including volunteers such as chaperones, as part of our code of conduct. All staff and volunteers must sign the code of conduct on an annual basis.

All members of staff are advised that their online conduct on social media can have an impact on their role and reputation within the dance school. They are encouraged to carefully consider the information, including text and images, they share online and only post things that they would be happy to be attributed to them as a teaching professional.

They should not portray themselves or allow friends to portray them, in a manner which may:

- bring the dance school into disrepute;
- lead to valid parental complaints;
- be deemed as derogatory towards the dance school;
- be derogatory towards students or parents/carers; or
- bring into question their appropriateness to work with children.

Information and content that staff members have access to as part of their employment, including photos and personal information about students and their family members or colleagues, will not be shared or discussed on social media sites.

All members of staff are advised to safeguard themselves and their privacy when using social media services. Advice will be provided to staff via staff training and by sharing appropriate guidance and resources on a regular basis.

This will include, but is not limited to:

- setting appropriate privacy levels on their personal accounts/sites;
- being aware of the implications of using location sharing services;
- opting out of public listings on social networking sites;
- logging out of accounts after use;
- using strong passwords; and
- ensuring staff do not represent their personal views as being that of the dance school.

Staff should not accept friend requests from current students or ex-students under the age of 13 and should notify their parents/carers if a friend request is made.

Staff will not use personal social media accounts to contact students or parents/carers, nor should any contact be accepted. Staff should always use their professional email address for all communications.

If a member of staff is made aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child and social networking these must be reported to the DSL.

Civil, legal or disciplinary action may be taken if staff are found to bring the profession or institution into disrepute, or if something is felt to have undermined confidence in their professional abilities



## *Students use of social media*

Safe and appropriate use of social media will be discussed with students as and when appropriate.

Students will be advised:

- to consider the benefits and risks of sharing personal details or information on social media sites which could identify them and/or their location;
- to only approve and invite known friends on social media sites and to deny access to others by making profiles private;
- not to meet any online friends without a parent/carer or other appropriate adults' permission, and to only do so when a trusted adult is present;
- to use safe passwords;
- to use social media sites which are appropriate for their age and abilities;
- how to block and report unwanted communications; and
- how to report concerns on social media, both within the setting and externally.

Any concerns regarding students' use of social media will be dealt with in accordance with existing policies, including anti-bullying and behaviour. Concerns regarding students' use of social media will be shared with parents/carers as appropriate.

## *Parents use of social media*

All parents/carers are required to sign a photography, video and social media consent form. Any changes to consent must be put in writing to the Principal.

Parents/carers are asked not to post images (photos and videos) of pupils other than their own children on social media sites unless they have the permission of the parents/carers of the other children pictured.

Although social networking sites may appear to be the quickest and easiest way to express frustrations or concerns about the dance school (and those associated with it), it is rarely appropriate to do so. Parents/carers are asked to raise queries, concerns or complaints directly with the principal rather than posting them on social media.

The dance school considers the following examples to be inappropriate uses of social networking sites. (This list is non-exhaustive and intended to provide examples only):

- making allegations about students at the dance school/cyber bullying;
- making complaints about the dance school/staff at the dance school;
- posting negative/offensive comments about specific students/staff at the dance school;
- posting racist comments; and
- posting comments which threaten violence.

Parents should also ensure that their children are not using social networking/internet sites in an inappropriate manner. It is expected that parents/carers explain to their children what is acceptable to post online. They are also expected to monitor their children's online activity, including in relation to their use of social media. Please take into consideration the terms and conditions of particular sites.



## *Cyber Bullying*

The dance school is committed to ensuring that all of its staff, parents/carers and students are treated with dignity and respect. Bullying and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. Cyber-bullying methods could include text messages, emails, phone calls, instant messenger services, circulating photos or video clips or by posting comments on web sites, blogs or in chat rooms.

Children are required:

- not to join any social networking sites if they are below the permitted age (13 for most sites including Facebook and Instagram);
- ask permission from parents/carers to join any of our social media groups.
- to not make inappropriate comments (including in private messages) about the dance school, its teachers or other students.
- not to post photos, videos or comments that include other students at the school unless you have the permission of their parents/carers.

## *Staff Expectations*

Members of staff who follow and/or like our official social media channels will be advised to use dedicated professional accounts where possible, to avoid blurring professional boundaries.

If members of staff are participating in online social media activity as part of their capacity as an employee of the setting, they will:

- sign our social media policy;
- be aware they are an ambassador for the setting;
- be professional, responsible, credible, fair and honest, and consider how the information being published could be perceived or shared;
- always act within the legal frameworks they would adhere to within the workplace, including libel, defamation, confidentiality, copyright, data protection and equalities laws;
- ensure appropriate consent has been given before sharing images on the official social media channel;
- not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of the setting, unless they are authorised to do so;
- not engage with any private/direct messaging with current or past students or parents/carers; and
- inform the DSL or principal of any concerns, such as criticism, inappropriate content or contact from learners.

## *Procedure the School will follow for inappropriate use of Social Media*

At the dance school, we will always try to deal with concerns raised by parents/carers in a professional and appropriate manner. We will usually discuss the matter with the parent/carer to try and resolve the matter and to ask that the relevant information be removed from the social networking site in question.



If the parent refuses to do this and continues to use social networking sites in a manner the dance school considers inappropriate, the dance school will consider taking the following action:

- take legal advice and/or legal action where the information posted is defamatory in any way or if the circumstances warrant this;
- set out the school's concerns to the parents/carers in writing, giving parents/carers a warning and requesting that the material in question is removed;
- contact the Police where the school feels it appropriate – for example, if it considers a crime (such as harassment) has been committed; or in cases where the posting has a racial element, is considered to be grossly obscene or is threatening violence; and
- contact the host/provider of the Social Networking site to complain about the content of the site and ask for removal of the information.

*Reviewed by Stacey Knight, Principal*

*Date: 6<sup>th</sup> September 2019*