Purpose. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to staff, students and parents in the use of social media.

Definition. "Social media" means any form of online publication or presence that allows end users to engage in multi-directional conversations and visual exchanges. Social media includes, but not limited to: Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube, WhatsApp, X (formerly Twitter), Second Life, blogs, wikis, social bookmarking, document sharing and email.

Common Code of Online Conduct. While the rules especially applicable to staff, students and parents vary in some particulars, a common code of conduct in the use of social media should be observed by all. Standards stated for staff, students and parents in separate sections 4, 5 and 6 below may, in appropriate circumstances, be applicable to others (e.g., teachers and parents rarely have the opportunity to "plagiarize," but of course should not do so). Expectations routinely applicable to all members of the school community are stated in this section 3.

1 **Be transparent**. Do not misrepresent who you are. Never assume the identity of another person.

2 **Be reflective**. Think before you communicate online. If you are upset or angry, give yourself time to calm down. Consider whether a negative communication you receive even requires a response. If it does, respond factually, not emotionally.

3 **Be respectful.** Employees, parents and students are a diverse group of people with many different customs, viewpoints and beliefs. Communications that are racist, pornographic, threatening or bullying are never appropriate. Broad generalizations ("all teachers ..."; "all students ...") are almost never accurate.

4 **Be factual.** Add to the information available to others, not just the noise.

5 **Write well**. In a school environment, everyone should try to express themselves effectively. Re-read your posts or emails for form and content. Check spelling, avoid slang and do not use excessive abbreviations. Use proper grammar, capitalization and punctuation. Send a polished communication, not a confused draft.

6 **Own your mistakes**. If you make a mistake, correct it. If another calls you on a mistake, own up to it. Apologize, if an apology is due.

7 **Keep confidences**. Do not violate the privacy of others. Social media

may seem private, but it is both public and durable — many people you don't know are likely to see what you write or post, and it may last for a very, very long time.

8 **Make proper attributions**. Follow copyright law and fair use protocols. When quoting or relying on another's work, make a proper citation to your source. When using a hyperlink, double check that it goes to the correct place and to appropriate content.

9 **Be smart**. People often share too much information electronically. People who reveal the names of their pets, parents, children or other details may give hackers the clues to passwords. Information about planned vacations can be used by burglars. Think about how information can be used *and* misused.

Staff. Staff are subject to the following specific rules regarding use of social media.

1 **You Are Always a School Employee**. Regardless of the electronic media you are using; whether you are using it at school or home; what equipment you are using; and whether or not you make a disclaimer, all electronic communications and posting may be regarded by Crown Pointe Academy as reflecting upon you as a school employee. Social media seems private, but is public. Teachers have been fired for "private" postings that revealed personal sexual behavior or use of alcohol — even when behavior is "legal," putting it online for the world to read about or see can be unprofessional. Crown Pointe Academy *reserves the right to treat anything you post as a communication that reflects upon the school*.

2 **Use Disclaimers**. While a disclaimer may not always be sufficient, it can be very helpful. *When you are communicating in a personal capacity and not representing the School, clearly say so.*

3 **Use School Media to Communicate with Parents and Students.** One of greatest dangers to appropriate teacher-student and teacher-parent relationships is confusing the professional relationship with a personal friendship. Teaching is by its nature a caring profession, and this boundary can be difficult to maintain. Crown Pointe Academy *has a strict policy of requiring each employee to only communicate with parents and students using the school's social media systems*. *Staff may not "friend" any student and should take appropriate steps to confirm that any friend requests they receive are not from a student.* Use of personal accounts for side-communication raises an automatic concern that there must be a

reason for not using school accounts and appropriate boundaries are not being maintained. *Email to anyone in the school community should be school-related and conform to school acceptable use policies*.

4.4 **Get Permission**. *Do not post photos or videos of fellow employees without their permission. Do not use photos or videos taken at school without permission. Do not post photos or videos that contain students or any post that discusses students with any third party without written, current administrative* ***and*** *parent consent*. FERPA is fully applicable to online information about students, and such information is presumed to be private. The Colorado Open Records Act (CORA) allows parents the right to demand production of school email discussing their child.

5 **Monitor Assigned or Suggested Content**. Services such as YouTube have no capacity to monitor everything posted on their site. URLs can be reused, so a link to an appropriate site or activity may be replaced by something completely inappropriate. *Make sure references you give students are current*.

6 **Behavior that is Unacceptable in Person is Unacceptable Online**. If you would not say it in person, do not say it online.

7 **Represent the School Well**. Consider how to present the school in the best light and what approach will build a stronger school community. *Do not circulate rumors or unsubstantiated information. You are fully responsible for what you post.*

Students. Students are subject to the following specific rules related to social media:

1 **Do not Plagiarize**. Do not copy the work of others. Give proper attribution for quotations and ideas. Write to develop and express your own thoughts.

2 **Use Appropriate Language**. Obscene, insulting, threatening, derogatory, inflammatory and bullying language is not appropriate and almost always detracts from your ideas.

3 **Respect the Power of Social Media**. Honor the wishes of fellow students that information (e.g., compromising stories) be kept private. Always remember that posted information may seem private, but is highly public.

4 **Do Not Spam**. Meaningless messages, mass messages and repetitive messages are not appropriate.

5 **Read, then Reply**. Do not skim statements and respond. Understand the thoughts of another before you comment on them.

6 **Do Not Hack**. Never access another person's identity or account, or restricted sources of information.

7 **Only Use School Media to Communicate with Teachers.** Teachers are not permitted to use non-school media to communicate with students and this restriction applies to students as well. *Do not attempt to "friend" a teacher on any non-school social media site (such as Facebook) and do not accept a friend request from a teacher. Report any such requests to Administration.* Use of personal accounts for side-communication raises an automatic concern that appropriate teacher-student boundaries are not being maintained.

Parents. Parents are subject to the following specific rules related to social media:

1 **Discourage Rumors.** Do not rely upon or pass-on unsubstantiated information or gossip. If information seems unlikely and inflammatory, it is most likely untrue and inflammatory. When in doubt, go directly to the source.

2 **Respect Confidentiality**. Many personnel issues and many issues involving other families and students are legitimately confidential (and many are confidential by law). If you would not want information about your job or your child made public, do not make or expect to see in public such information about others.

3 **Do Not Perform Student Work**. Your child's work is his or hers.

4 **Debate Issues Constructively.** Schools often face legitimate controversies. Crown Pointe Academy respects and solicits parent voices in addressing such issues. Effective arguments are usually civil, measured, well-supported and take into account the legitimate reasons for opposing views. Ineffective arguments are abusive, disrespectful of others, and marked by hyperbole or factual carelessness.

Consequences. Consequences for behavior inconsistent with this policy can range from warnings or counseling, to requiring a written apology, and up to termination of staff employment, expulsion of students, or barring parents from school media and grounds.

Adopted: August 2013
Reviewed: October 2015, October 14, 2026
Revised: February 2023
Approved: August 2013, February 2023
Rationale: Reformatted to look like rest of policies.To be aligned with Colorado Charter School Institute, new authorizer. Added new social media platforms, grammatical changes (2023).