



## **Social Media & Your Trip - A Helpful Guide**

Every school has a different stance on Social Media; much of it is centrally controlled but policies can vary widely between schools and colleges. Before you read this, please do check with your own school what your Social Media Policy is as this will be your definitive guide as to best practise. Below are just some of our suggestions, in order to give you some food for thought, and which could be used in conjunction with regular intranet pages, school web pages and other more traditional forms of communication.

### **Before Departure**

Before heading out on your trip, you will need to communicate with your students' parents about several things, possibly including payment schedules & instructions, Parents' Evening instructions, trip agenda etc. You may wish to use the more traditional methods of communication with regards to this, but you could also use the School's Facebook and/or Twitter page to reinforce and remind parents and students about particular issues. As a point to note, we can also provide you with your own dedicated school ski trip page, where all of your travel information will be collated and this is somewhere you can easily direct you students and parents to, should they have any questions.

Facebook, Instagram and Twitter seem to be the more popular social media platforms for communicating about your trip, with Twitter being a particular favourite once actually in resort. If you have never used either before, although it is pretty straightforward to set up using the on-screen instructions, we suggest heading on over to your IT department to get them to help you, as they will be able to reinforce any peculiarities with regards to the school policy. You may wish to discuss at your Parents' Evening any particular handles you plan on using for the duration, and allow parents the opportunity to join and follow the page, reinforcing any privacy notifications at the same time. Be sure to only allow those to follow the feed whom you have approved and known to have some direct involvement in or with the trip!

### **Once you're in resort**

You may to delegate the job of posting every day (or more) to someone else in your team; there are often those who are far more into it than you might be, and you may want to free yourself of the responsibility of it! We suggest posting something at least once a day, and around the same time. This helps parents know when to look out for an update, so they know they won't miss it.

Try to ensure that you get some action shots or mentions (or both) of every single group, or if your group is small enough, every student. Parents want to see their children having a great time, not necessarily everyone else's, so be sure to cover the whole spectrum. Ensure that you also take pictures of them participating in the evening activities as well as skiing, resort and hotel shots; this helps them gain a true picture of what they have spent their money on!

## Students and social media

You may wish to make a particular point at the Parents Evening about best use of Social Media (in line with your school policy) about how students should behave on all social media platforms whilst away. Many schools ban students from using their mobile phones at meal times for example, in order to encourage appropriate social interaction, but this is up to you of course! You won't be able to control all social media interaction, however you may wish to discuss 'curfews' or 'amnesties' with regards to using phones, appropriate and suitable content and most importantly, not posting about any possible injuries or other incidents until such time as you have had the opportunity to talk to the relevant people, including parents.

## Popular sites and concerns

Often, we as adults are not aware of all the current social media platforms which are popular with the students, so it can be difficult to police, especially as they may be using multiple platforms. Below are just a few examples of alternative platforms which may or may not be impacting on your students, which you may or may not already be aware of. Popular ones include:

- **GroupMe & Kirk Messenger:** These two often slip under the radar as they are free to use, so won't come off any bill, and they do contain some adult themed GIFs, covert marketing and Stranger Danger is an issue (especially Kirk).
- **WhatsApp**
- **Instagram** (public settings are the default)
- **Tumblr** (porn, graphic imagery and violence are easy to find)
- **Twitter** (most teens have public accounts)
- **Houseparty & Live.ly** (live group video chat); these can be screenshotted, and strangers can be invited (although chats can be locked too). Musical.ly is also similar but centres around music (creating/lip-synching & sharing).
- **Live.me; YouNow: Broadcast, Chat & Watch Live Video:** these are apps which let children stream and watch live broadcasts of themselves. Anonymous users can join too.
- **Snapchat & Whisper.** Both these apps seem to encourage sharing of silly, goofy, or more worryingly, sexual content and confessions of depression, substance abuse and lies told. Whisper offers a 'meet up' section too.
- **Monkey - Have Fun Chats** (live video chatting with randomly selected strangers). This is connected to Snapchat and can easily be connected to.
- **MeetMe: Chat and Meet New People.** Although not a dating app, it pretty much acts in this way.
- **Omegle:** chat site that puts anonymous strangers together. This is not a site for children; it is often filled with people looking for sexual chat and live video sharing.
- **Yubo** (formerly Yellow) - basically Tinder for teens.

### Reference:

<https://www.common sense media.org/blog/16-apps-and-websites-kids-are-heading-to-after-facebook#> 10 August 2018.

**Got a question, concern, suggestion or maybe some advice for fellow party leaders? Get in touch! We'd love to hear from you.**