

Social Media & Professional Boundaries Policy

Effective Date: September 2026

Purpose

Hamilton Dance recognises the benefits of social media as a means of celebrating achievement, promoting opportunities and communicating with our school community.

However, the use of social media also creates important considerations around **safeguarding, professional boundaries, confidentiality and the reputation of Hamilton Dance and its staff.**

This policy applies to all staff, teachers, assistants and volunteers and covers **all social media accounts**, whether described as personal, professional, dance-related, teaching-related or otherwise.

Official Hamilton Dance Social Media

Hamilton Dance uses its official social media channels to:

- promote classes, events and opportunities;
- celebrate the achievements of our pupils and staff;
- communicate important information and deadlines;
- share appropriate photographs and video footage in accordance with our Terms & Conditions; and
- promote the ethos, values and culture of Hamilton Dance.

Where appropriate, staff may contribute content for use on the school's official social media channels.

Staff Social Media & Professional Boundaries

All staff are expected to maintain **clear and appropriate professional boundaries online**, just as they would in person.

For the avoidance of doubt, **an account created or used by a teacher for dance, teaching, choreography or professional purposes remains an individual staff member's account unless it is an official Hamilton Dance account administered and authorised by the school.**

Staff must therefore:

- **not invite, accept, follow or encourage follows from current Hamilton Dance pupils under the age of 18 from any personal, professional or dance-related social media account;**

- not communicate privately with pupils through Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat, WhatsApp or other personal social media/messaging platforms;
- not use a separate “**dance account**”, “**teacher account**” or “**professional account**” as a way of connecting directly with Hamilton Dance pupils;
- not tag or directly engage individual pupils from personal or independently operated accounts in a way which creates an ongoing personal social-media relationship;
- ensure all communication with pupils takes place through **Hamilton Dance's approved communication channels**;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries with parents and carers and **not actively seek or encourage personal social-media relationships with Hamilton Dance families**;
- ensure that communication regarding Hamilton Dance pupils, classes, performances, competitions or school matters takes place through official Hamilton Dance channels or email rather than personal direct messages;
- never discuss confidential school matters, pupils, parents, colleagues or internal decisions on social media;
- be mindful that their online activity, comments, photographs, likes, shares and interactions may be visible to pupils, parents and colleagues and can reflect upon their professional role at Hamilton Dance;
- report any online activity which raises a safeguarding concern to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Existing Connections

Where a staff member is currently followed by, or connected with, Hamilton Dance pupils through an individual social-media account, including a dance or professional account, **the staff member is expected to take reasonable steps to remove that connection and restore the appropriate professional boundary.**

Staff should not be concerned about appearing unfriendly by doing so. Maintaining appropriate online boundaries is a **professional and safeguarding responsibility**, not a reflection of the relationship between teacher and pupil within the school.

Parents & Carers

We recognise that in a close dance-school community, staff and parents will naturally develop warm and friendly relationships.

However, staff should remain mindful that they are interacting with parents primarily through their **professional role within Hamilton Dance.**

Personal social-media relationships, frequent private messaging or overly familiar online interaction with parents should therefore be avoided where it could blur professional boundaries, create perceived favouritism, involve discussion of other pupils or staff, or compromise the professional relationship.

Where a genuine friendship existed independently of Hamilton Dance, this should be managed sensibly and with appropriate professional discretion.

Photographs, Videos & Hamilton Dance Content

Photographs or footage of Hamilton Dance pupils should only be shared through **authorised Hamilton Dance channels** unless specific permission has been given.

Staff should not routinely post pupils to their own personal, professional or dance-related accounts.

Where sharing an official Hamilton Dance post, staff should share the **original school post** rather than downloading and independently reposting images or footage of pupils.

Pupils should tag **@hamiltondance123** rather than individual members of staff when sharing Hamilton Dance-related content.

Online Conduct

No member of the Hamilton Dance community should post content which:

- compromises safeguarding or professional boundaries;
- is confidential to Hamilton Dance;
- amounts to bullying, discrimination, harassment or victimisation;
- brings Hamilton Dance or an individual associated with the school into disrepute;
- is defamatory or knowingly false;
- contains inappropriate, offensive, threatening or sexually explicit material;
- breaches copyright or privacy;
- undermines another pupil, parent, member of staff or the school; or
- is otherwise unlawful or inappropriate.

Breaches of This Policy

Concerns regarding inappropriate use of social media or failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries will be addressed by the Principal.

Where appropriate, staff may be instructed to **remove content, cease communication, remove social-media connections or take other reasonable steps to restore appropriate professional boundaries.**

Repeated or serious breaches may be addressed through the school's disciplinary procedures and, where safeguarding concerns arise, the appropriate safeguarding procedures will be followed.