



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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Policy author	Chief Finance and Operations Officer
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SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy aims to:

- Set guidelines and rules on the use of school's social media channels
- Establish clear expectations for the way members of the school community engage with each other and members of the public online
- Support the school's policies on data protection, online safety and safeguarding

Staff, students and parents/carers are required to read, understand and comply with this social media policy.

This policy applies to the use of social media for both business and personal purposes, whether during school/working hours or otherwise.

It applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using:

- School IT facilities and equipment
- Equipment belonging to members of staff and pupils
- Any other IT/Internet-enabled equipment

All members of the school should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, may be subject to copyright, safeguarding and data protection legislation. Everyone must also operate in line with the school's equalities, harassment, child protection, safer recruitment, and online safety and ICT acceptable use policies.

1.1 Definition of social media

For the purposes of this document, 'social media' is considered to include all technologies that allow individuals to communicate and share information (including photos and video). This includes group messaging services such as WhatsApp.

2. USE OF OFFICIAL SCHOOL SOCIAL MEDIA

Each setting within the Trust has their own social media accounts on Facebook. These accounts are managed by nominated internal staff and overseen by the ICT support team and Director of Operations. Staff members who have not been authorised to manage, or post to, the account, must not access, or attempt to access, these accounts.

If you have suggestions for something you'd like to appear on our school social media channel(s), please speak to your Headteacher or Head of School/College.

2.1 Facebook

The school will post on Facebook:

- Alerts about changes (e.g. changes to procedures, severe weather updates, staffing changes)
- Reminders (e.g. approaching deadlines, events or class activities, reminders about policies/procedures)
- Advertisements for school events or activities
- Job vacancies or requests for volunteers
- Links to newsletters, guidance and factsheets for parents and carers
- Achievements of pupils and staff
- Photos or posts about school trips, events and activities
- Seasonal greetings and messages about religious festivals
- Invitations to provide feedback

Please note, prior consent will be obtained for all posts containing names and photographs, in line with our Data Protection policies.

2.3 Moderation

Staff responsible for our social media accounts will delete as soon as reasonably possible:

- Abusive, racist, sexist, homophobic or inflammatory comments
- Comments we consider to be spam
- Personal information, such as telephone numbers, address details, etc.
- Posts that advertise commercial activity or ask for donations

Every reasonable effort will be taken to politely address concerns or behaviour of individual users, following the school's complaints policy. If users are repeatedly abusive or inappropriate, they will be blocked.

Staff responsible for our social media accounts will also ensure that all content shared on social media platforms is age appropriate for the school community.

2.4 Following other social media users

- Settings within the Trust are only permitted to 'like' or 'follow' pages with a non-commercial interest
- Should settings within the Trust 'like' or 'follow' pages, this doesn't imply any endorsement of any kind

3. PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY STAFF

The trust expects all staff (including trustees, governors and volunteers) to consider the safety of pupils and the risks (reputational and financial) to the school when using social media channels, including when doing so in a personal capacity. Staff are also responsible for checking and maintaining appropriate privacy and security settings of their personal social media accounts. Staff members **must** report any safeguarding issues they become aware of.

When using social media, staff **must not**:

- Use personal accounts to conduct school business
- Accept 'friend requests' from, or communicate with, pupils past or present
- Complain about the school, individual pupils, colleagues or parents/carers
- Reference or share information about individual pupils, colleagues or parents/carers
- Post images of pupils
- Express personal views or opinions that could be interpreted as those of the school
- Link their social media profile to their work email account
- Use personal social media during timetabled teaching time

Any concerns regarding a member of staff's personal use of social media will be dealt with in line with the staff behavior policy and Code of Conduct.

Any communication received from current pupils (unless they are family members) on any personal social media accounts will be reported to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or member of the senior leadership team immediately.

Staff should not have contact via personal accounts with past pupils (if ongoing communication is required, this should be using via official school channels).

3.1 Harassment via social media

Staff must not use social media—whether on work or personal accounts, and whether during or outside working hours—to harass, bully, intimidate or target colleagues, pupils, parents/carers or any member of the school community. This includes posts, comments, messages, images or any online behaviour that could cause offence, embarrassment, distress or create a hostile environment. Any such behaviour will be managed under the Trust’s Dignity at Work Policy and may result in disciplinary action

4. PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY PUPILS

The school encourages pupils to

- Be respectful to members of staff, and the school, at all times
- Be respectful to other pupils and parents/carers
- Direct any complaints or concerns through the school’s official channels, so they can be dealt with in line with the school’s complaints procedure

Pupils **should not** use social media to:

- Complain about individual members of staff
- Complain about the school
- Make inappropriate comments about members of staff, other pupils or parents/carers
- Post images of other pupils without their permission

Any concerns about a pupil’s social media use will be dealt with in line with the school’s behaviour policy.

5. PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY PARENTS/CARERS

The school expects parents/carers to help us model safe, responsible and appropriate social media use for our pupils.

When communicating with the school via official communication channels, or using private/independent channels to talk about the school, parents and carers should:

- Be respectful towards, and about, members of staff and the school at all times
- Be respectful of, and about, other parents/carers and other pupils and children
- Direct any complaints or concerns through the school’s official channels, so they can be dealt with in line with the school’s complaints procedure

Parents/carers **should not** use social media to:

- Complain about individual members of staff, other parents/carers or pupils
- Complain about the school
- Make inappropriate comments about members of staff, other parents/carers or pupils (Please refer to the Online Safety Act 2023, *Section 181 Threatening Communications Offence*)
- Draw attention to, or discuss, behaviour incidents
- Post images of children other than their own

6. TRAINING AND AWARENESS

Training around Data Protection and GDPR covers social media usage.

7. MONITORING AND REVIEW

We reserve the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, staff activities using our IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to social media postings and activities, for legitimate business purposes. This includes ascertaining and demonstrating that expected standards are being met by those using the systems, and for the detection and investigation of unauthorised use of the systems (including where this is necessary to prevent or detect crime).

The headteacher/ Head of School/College will monitor the implementation of this policy, including making sure that it is updated to reflect the needs and circumstances of the school.

The board of trustees is responsible for approving this policy.

8. RELATED POLICIES

- Child protection policy
- ICT and internet acceptable use policy
- Behaviour policy
- Staff behaviour policy
- Code of Conduct
- Data Protection policy
- Dignity at Work Policy