



Social Media Policy

Policy:	SNMAT Social Media
Approved by:	
Date:	June 2022
Review cycle:	Annual

VERSION CONTROL			
VERSION	DATE	AUTHOR	CHANGES
July 2019	May 2020	JS, DO, SKP	Policy reviewed and minor typo changes amended. Section on Fake news (page 6) has been removed.
Sept 2021	October 2021	DO	Policy reviewed by I.T. Director – no changes made to the previous edition.
2022	May 2022	MY	Added references to supplementary documentation to support schools when setting up Social Media accounts. Page 5 (changes highlighted in Yellow) Paragraphs numbered throughout the policy
2022	June 2022	MY	Added specific instructions around professional inter-communication, highlighting to stay away from Personal Social Media platforms (WhatsApp)

Introduction

1. The widespread availability and use of social media applications bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate in new and exciting ways. It is important that these technologies and services are used effectively and flexibly. However, the use of social networking applications has implications for the duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is also important to ensure that their use is balanced with legal, compliance and reputational responsibilities to SNMAT, the academies and the community.

Scope

2. The aim of the policy is:
 - To safeguard all children and young people in respect of the use of social media;
 - To provide a balance between supporting innovation and a framework for good practice
 - To protect the Trust, the academy, the staff and governors from legal risks;
 - To protect the reputations of the Trust, the academy, the staff and governors;
 - To ensure that everyone accepts personal responsibility for their communications on social media and recognises that they will be available to be read for a very long time.
3. This policy applies to the use of social media for both business and personal purposes, whether during working hours or otherwise and regardless of whether the social media is accessed using the Trust/academy IT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to members of staff.
4. The policy applies to anyone who works with children/young people within the Trust, including consultants, contractors, casual and agency staff and volunteers (collectively referred to as staff in this policy). Third parties who have access to SNMAT electronic communications systems and equipment are also required to comply with this policy.
5. For the purposes of this policy social networking applications include, but are not limited to: Blogs, Online discussion forums, Collaborative spaces, Media sharing services, Microblogging' applications and online gaming environments.
6. Examples include Twitter, Facebook, Windows Live Messenger, YouTube, Flickr, Xbox Live, Blogger, Tumblr, Last.fm, LinkedIn and comment streams on public websites such as newspaper sites.
7. Many of the principles of this policy also apply to other types of online presence such as virtual worlds.

Rationale

8. Use of social media can pose risks to the Trust's ability to safeguard children and young people, protect its confidential information and reputation, and can jeopardise compliance with legal obligations.
9. All members of staff should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to

copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation.

Roles and Responsibilities

10. Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is accountable for the effective operation of the social media policy overall. Regular reports around safeguarding in the academies are received by the Board. These include reference to social media where appropriate.

11. Local Governing Body

The responsibility for the effective operation of the policy in the academy has been delegated to the Local Governing Body who will monitor and review its operation at the academy by receiving regular information about social media issues and monitoring reports. It is suggested that the safeguarding governor includes the monitoring of social media within their remit.

12. Principal/Headteacher

The responsibility for the 'day to day' management and operation of the social media policy has been delegated to the Principal/Headteacher. The Principal/Headteacher is responsible for:

- ensuring that all the staff have read the policy and understand the standards expected of them.
- ensuring training and advice is provided for staff;
- ensuring that all staff are aware of the procedures that need to be followed in the event of a social media incident taking place.

13. Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- ensuring that they have read and understood the policy;
- reporting any misuse of social media to the Principal/headteacher;
- directing any questions regarding the content or application of this policy to the Principal/Headteacher;
- ensuring that they follow the guidance for good practice in the use of social media;
- ensuring that they adhere to the expectations for teachers' professional conduct as set out in the Teachers Standards.

Objectives

14. It is the policy of the Trust/academy to:

- establish and enforce good social media usage policies;
- ensure social media is used responsibly and safely in order to protect pupils/students, parents, staff and the Academy/Trust.
- ensure that staff behave professionally in their use of social media;
- ensure the reputations of the Trust, its academies and staff are protected;
- ensure the intellectual property and confidential information of the Trust and its academies is respected;
- provide staff with guidance as to what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate usage of social media;

- request staff to remove internet postings that are deemed to be inappropriate;
- ensure that staff understand that inappropriate use of social media may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure regardless of whether the breach is committed during working hours, and regardless of whether Trust/academy equipment or facilities are used. The most severe consequence of this could be dismissal.

Links with Other Policies

15. The Social Media Policy should be read in conjunction with the other SNMAT policies specifically:

ICT Policy

Academy Acceptable Use Policy

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Policy

Data Protection Policy

Policy for Child Protection to Safeguard the Welfare of Children

Equal Opportunities

E-Safety Policy

Every effort should be made to ensure that social media is not used in a way that breaches any SNMAT policies, agreements or legislation.

Guidance for Implementation

16. The following sections of the policy provide staff with common-sense guidelines and recommendations for using social media responsibly and safely in order to protect children/young people, staff and the Academy/Trust.

Best Practice in the Use of social media for Educational Purposes

17. Social media can be used within the curriculum and to support student learning. For example, the academy may have an official blog or Twitter account. There are also many possibilities for using social media to enhance and develop students' learning further. Supplementary documentation is available for key social media platforms used by schools including recommended settings:

- Facebook Pages
- Facebook Groups
- Twitter
- Private Youtube Channel

18. When using social media for educational purposes, the following practices should be observed:

- There should be a process for approval by senior leaders;
- Distinct and dedicated social media sites or accounts, entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by a member of staff, should always be set up for educational purposes which, wherever possible, should be linked to an official academy email account;
- The URL and identity of any academy social media sites should be notified to the Principal/Headteacher before access is permitted for students;

- Clear processes for the administration and monitoring of these accounts involving at least two members of staff should be in place
- A code of behaviour for users of the accounts, including systems for reporting and dealing with abuse should be established;
- The content of any academy-sanctioned social media site should be solely professional and should reflect well on the academy;
- Care should be taken that any links to external sites from the account are appropriate and safe;
- Photographs of children or any personally identifying information should not be published on an academy social media account without the explicit written consent of parents/carers in accordance with the Data Protection Policy;
- Any inappropriate comments on, or abuse of, academy-sanctioned social media should immediately reported to the Principal/Headteacher who should make a permanent record for evidence purposes (eg screen shot) prior to removal;
- All social media accounts created for educational purposes should include a link in the About or Info page to the Trust ICT Policy, academy ICT Acceptable Use Policy, Social Media Policy and Code of Conduct on the academy website. This will indicate that the account is officially sanctioned by the academy.

Responsible Personal Use of Social Media

19. It is acknowledged that in education, particularly in the primary sector, staff may have children or other family members who attend their place of work. It is recognised that in these circumstances there will be social communications between the member of staff and parents of other children and members of the academy community. Where this applies members of staff are advised:

- To be particularly careful about keeping their social and work communications separate;
- To ensure that all communications are with parents not with the children;
- To inform the Principal/Headteacher so that they are aware of the situation.

Terms used:

Appropriate: activities listed are acceptable in terms of ICT use.

Inappropriate: activities listed as inappropriate may potentially lead to misconduct and disciplinary proceedings. In some cases, this could lead to dismissal and legal action.

Appropriate	Inappropriate
Blocking unwanted communication from pupils	Inviting, accepting or engaging in communications with pupils over social network sites
Reporting communication received from children/young people on any personal social media sites to the Designated Safeguarding lead	Accepting any current pupil of any age or any ex-pupil of the academy under the age of 18 as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account or interacting on social network sites and forums
Reporting any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media to the Designated Safeguarding Lead	

Setting all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts	Posting disparaging or defamatory statements about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Academy/Trust; • the students or their parents or carers; • the Directors, governors or staff; • suppliers and vendors; and • other affiliates and stakeholders,
Using an official academy e-mail account for all email communication on academy business with staff and members of the academy community	Posting comments about specific individual matters and sensitive Academy/Trust-related topics
Ensuring that your profile and any content you post are consistent with the professional image you present to pupils/students and colleagues	Using academy/Trust logos, brand names, slogans or other trademarks, or post any of their confidential or proprietary information without prior written permission
Making it clear that your views do not represent those of the Trust/academy	Circulating chain letters, other spam, commercial, personal, religious or political solicitations, or promotion of outside organisations unrelated to the Academy/Trust's business at work
Refraining from making a communication if you are in any way uncertain about the appropriateness of the content and checking with the Principal/Headteacher	Using social media in any way that would breach any other Trust or academy policies
Printing out any content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on the Academy/Trust or its stakeholders and contacting the Headteacher/Principal about it	Providing references for other individuals on social or professional networking sites, as such references, positive and negative, can be attributed to the Academy/Trust and create legal liability for both the author of the reference and the Academy/Trust.
Referencing sources of particular information you post or upload where appropriate and citing them accurately to protect yourself and the Academy/Trust against liability for copyright infringement. Asking the Principal/Headteacher if you have any questions about whether a particular post or upload might violate anyone's copyright or trademark before making the communication.	

Monitoring Social Media Usage

20. As part of active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to pro-actively monitor the Internet for public postings about the trust/academy. The academy should ensure a procedure is in place to effectively respond to social media comments made by others.
21. The academy's use of social media for professional purposes should be checked regularly by the nominated responsible person to ensure compliance with the Trust/academy policies, it is advised to only use SNMAT provided systems O365, E-Mail and Teams for professional communication with colleagues and refrain from using personal social media platforms such as WhatsApp, SnapChat, Messenger/FaceBook, iMessenger etc.
22. Staff are reminded that social media postings and activities may be monitored as explained in the ICT Policy.

Review

23. This policy is reviewed annually by the Trust in consultation with the recognised trade unions. The application and outcomes of this policy will be monitored to ensure it is working effectively.