

**Hope, Kindness, Courage, Integrity, Trust, Respect and Responsibility**.

**Acceptable use of ICT**

**Social Media Policy**

This policy used to be one of three separate but related policies regarding the acceptable use of ICT. The other two (**Internet safety Policy and Data Protection and Handling Policy)** have now been replaced by our Data Protection Handbook 2018:

**Person responsible for the Policy: Deputy Headteacher**

**Newly Created: December 2016**

**Last updated: June 2019**

**Review date: June 2020**

**Portfolio Group Responsible: SEN and Safeguarding – Jan Gatley**

**Social Media Policy**

This social media policy is written to make sure that social media is managed appropriate for the whole school community. It applies to staff use of the school’s social media accounts and use of their personal accounts. The principles set out are designed to ensure that staff members use social media responsibly so that the confidentiality of students and other staff and the reputation of the school are safeguarded.

**Note also that Section 10 of the staff Code of Conduct which all staff are required to read and acknowledge, provides further, specific guidance regarding staff use of social media**

Staff responsible for maintaining school social media platforms should also read our Guidance on contributing to and managing social media accounts.

**Legal framework** The school is committed to ensuring that all staff provide confidential services that meet the highest standards. All individuals working on behalf of the school are bound by a legal duty of confidence and other laws to protect the confidential information they have access to during the course of their work. Disclosure of confidential information on social media is likely to be a breach of a number of laws and professional codes of conduct, including:

* + - the Human Rights Act 1998
    - Common law duty of confidentiality, and
    - the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR.

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

* Person-identifiable information, e.g. student and employee records protected by the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR
* Information divulged in the expectation of confidentiality
* School records containing organisationally or publicly sensitive information
* Any commercially sensitive information such as information relating to commercial proposals or current negotiations, and
* Politically sensitive information.

Staff should also be aware that other laws relating to libel, defamation, harassment and copyright may apply to information posted on social media, including:

* + - Libel Act 1843
    - Defamation Acts 1952 and 1996
    - Protection from Harassment Act 1997
    - Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
    - Malicious Communications Act 1998
    - Communications Act 2003, and
    - Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

The school could be held responsible for acts of their employees in the course of their employment. For example, staff who harass co-workers online or who engage in bullying or discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, etc or who defame a third party while at work may render the school liable.

**Principles for the use of social media on behalf of the school**

The administrators of any school social media accounts must be employees of the school and acting on the authorisation of the headteacher.

Staff must act in the best interests of children and young people when creating, participating in or contributing content to social media sites.

In addition you must:

* Be aware at all times of the need to keep your personal and professional lives separate. You should not put yourself in a position where there is a conflict between your work for the school and your personal interests.
* Be accurate, fair and transparent when creating or altering online sources of information on behalf of the school.
* Not engage in activities involving social media that might bring the school into disrepute or represent your views as those of the school.
* Not discuss on social media personal information about students, the school staff or other professionals you interact with as part of your job.
* Not use social media to attack, insult, abuse or defame students, their families, colleagues, other professionals, other organisations or the school.
* Ensure you have read and act in accordance with the staff code of conduct, in particular section 10

**Personal use of social media**

In order to safeguard your reputation and the reputation of the school, you are required to follow these guidelines in your personal use of social media.

* You must not have contact through any personal social media with any student from this or any other school, unless the students are family members or part of an activity sanctioned or recorded by the school.
* You must decline ‘friend requests’ from students that you receive to your personal social media accounts. If you receive requests from students who are not family members, you should discuss these in general terms in class and encourage students to become ‘friends’ of the official school site.
* Information that you have access to as part of your employment, including personal information about students and their family members, must not be discussed on your personal social media.
* Photographs, videos or any other types of images of students and their families must not be published on your personal social media.
* School email addresses must not be used for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.
* Ensure you have read and act in accordance with the staff code of conduct, in particular section 10

**Guidance for your own privacy and safety**

* You are advised to set the privacy levels of your personal accounts as strictly as you can and opt out of public listings on social networking sites.
* You should keep your passwords confidential and change them frequently.
* You should be careful about what you post online; it is not advisable to reveal home addresses, telephone numbers and other personal information.

**Appendix A - Guidance on contributing to and moderating school social media accounts**

The creation and use of any school social media accounts must have the authorisation of the headteacher and meet the communication aims of the school. Maintaining social media accounts requires a regular time commitment and staff time should be identified in the school day to ensure all school social media accounts are up to date and any queries or comments are responded to. All accounts must meet requirement of related school policy on behavior, code of conduct, school values or any other policy regulating behavior of student or staff.

**Maintaining ‘broadcast’ accounts**

Any response should be met with an official response “ please contact the official school account or email.”

You may choose to use your social media accounts as ‘broadcast’ accounts – to disseminate news and information but not to enter into dialogue or address comments or complaints.

Broadcast accounts act as a one-way communication channel, giving parents an accessible source of information and saving on lost letters and printing costs. They can also be used to promote your school’s activities to the wider community. Twitter accounts can be linked to an RSS feed from your website to automatically tweet new content when it is uploaded to the website.

Tweets and postings can both be scheduled on Twitter and Facebook allowing you to plan a day or week’s worth of updates with a nominated member of staff managing the account. If you are clear in the profile of the account that it is for broadcast only, you need not respond to questions or comments in such a public space.

**Maintaining accounts that respond to comments and queries**

Using your social media accounts to answer questions and respond to queries can be daunting – giving parents and other members of the community a platform where they could criticise the school may appear to offer more negatives than positives; however, using social media means that you are able to respond quickly and professionally to any concerns that are raised. Having school Twitter and Facebook accounts will mean that you are likely to hear of these concerns more quickly and be able to respond – it’s probable that messages will be sent to you directly rather than being posted on other sites where you can’t respond to them.

The key is to consider the following guidelines when maintaining an active account: Ensure the person responsible for the content and moderation of the account/s has set times during the day to manage the account – set 15 minutes slots at the beginning of the day, lunchtime and the end of the day to look out for and respond to queries and comments.

* If more than one person is responsible for content, it’s important to develop the school’s ‘voice’ and keep it simple, friendly and straightforward.
* To encourage engagement with your accounts, follow the 80:20 rule – make 80% of your content about your students’ achievements and interesting news, and 20% information giving about term dates and uniform, etc.
* Responding quickly to negative comments will ensure they don't get out of control and enable you to address them individually in private and not in a public forum. However do not engage in a protracted dialogue and advise complaints to use the normal school complaints process.

**POLICY HISTORY**

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| Policy / Version Date | Summary of change | Contact | Implementation  Date | Review Date |
| 2017 | Newly written policy | T Tucker | February 2017 | February 2018 |
| 2018 | Updated re GDPR | S Marshall | July 2018 | July 2019 |
| 2019 | Updated | S Marshall | June 2019 | June 2020 |
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