



Social Media Policy

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Monitoring & Review	Finance & Resources Committee	
Links	DfE statutory guidance, Staff Code of Conduct Policy, Online Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Agreement.	
Staff responsible	IT Director, Principals	

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1. Rationale

- 1.1 We encourage the responsible use of social media. Responsible use of social media can be positive for learning and teaching. It can also be personally enjoyable and beneficial.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all staff members use of social media, including:
- on behalf of the academy;
 - as part of their work directly with learners;
 - in their wider professional lives; and
 - in their personal lives where it affects their professional standards
- 1.3 In this policy, we define social media to mean:
- ‘Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking’.

Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to;

- (a) Clarify what the academy considers to be appropriate and inappropriate use of networking by staff members;
- (b) Encourage social networking to be used in a beneficial and positive way;
- (c) Safeguard staff members, learners, parents, carers and members of the public social network;
- (d) Safeguard the reputation of the academy, other academies, other organisations and employers from unwarranted abuse through social networking; and
- (e) Set out the procedures that will be followed where it is considered that staff members have inappropriately or unlawfully used social networking.

Responsibility and Accountability

1.4 Principals

- 1.4.1 Should ensure that all existing and new staff members are trained and become familiar with this policy and its relationship to the academy’s standards, policies and guidance on the use of ICT and e-safety;
- 1.4.2 Should provide opportunities to discuss appropriate social networking use by staff members on a regular basis and ensure that any queries raised are resolved swiftly;
- 1.4.3 Must ensure that any allegations raised in respect of access to social networking sites are investigated promptly and appropriately, in accordance with the academy’s disciplinary procedure, code of conduct and internet safety guidelines and should ensure there is a system in place for regular monitoring.

1.5 Academy staff members

- 1.5.1 Should ensure that they are familiar with the contents of this policy and its relationship to the academy’s standards, policies and guidance on the use of ICT and e-safety;
- 1.5.2 Should raise any queries or areas of concern they have relating to the use of social networking sites and interpretation of this policy – with their line manager in the first instance; and
- 1.5.3 Must comply with this policy where specific activities or conduct is prohibited

1.6 Trustees and Local Governors

- 1.6.1 Should ensure their own behaviour is in line with that expected.

When using social media at any time

- 1.7 Staff members must not place a child or young person at risk of harm.
- 1.8 Staff members must follow statutory and academy safeguarding procedures at all times when using social media and ensure that any learners in images or video used on academy social media feeds have the explicit permission from parents or carers.

- 1.9 Staff members must report all situations where any child or young person is at potential risk by using relevant statutory and academy child protection procedures.
- 1.10 Staff members must not allow their use of social media to affect their ability to do their job in any way.
- 1.11 Social media relationships must be declared with other personal relationships or interests whenever necessary or appropriate.
- 1.12 Staff members must maintain the reputation of the academy, its staff members, its learners, its parents and carers, its Trustees and Local Governors, its wider community and their employees.
- 1.13 Staff members must not contribute, access or comment on any social media content which is illegal, discriminatory, sexual or otherwise offensive.
- 1.14 Staff members must not use social media to criticise or insult their academy, our Trust, its staff members, its learners, its parents and carers, its Trustees or Local Governors or its wider community.
- 1.15 Staff members must not use social media to harass, bully or intimidate any learner, parent, carer, member of staff, Trustee or Local Governor or other member of the wider academy community.
- 1.16 Staff members are responsible for their actions (and their consequences) whenever they use social media.
- 1.17 Staff members are responsible for all social media content linked to their social media profiles.
- 1.18 Staff members must understand that social media offers no guarantee of privacy and that any content they produce can be shared more widely with others. A member of staff's professional reputation or the reputation of the academy or our trust could be damaged by content, perhaps which was intended to be private, being shared more widely than intended.
- 1.19 Staff members are personally responsible for the configuration and use of any personal social media accounts they have. With the exception of LinkedIn and Twitter, staff members are advised not to identify themselves as an employee of Summit Learning Trust and ensure all possible privacy settings are activated to prevent learners from making contact on personal profiles.
- 1.20 Staff members must raise all doubts, questions and concerns related to social media with academy leaders. Staff members must seek advice if they are not sure if any particular use of social media (or a related action) is appropriate or would potentially breach this policy. Staff cannot rely on their ignorance or lack of knowledge to defend any breach of this policy.

When using social media on behalf of the academy or our trust

- 1.21 Staff members must be given explicit permission to use social media on behalf of their academy by the Principal, and on behalf of our trust by the CEO.
- 1.22 Staff members must follow all related procedures and GDPR requirements of the academy when acting on behalf of the school.
- 1.23 Staff members must have separate user accounts for academy use of social media.
- 1.24 Staff must not use school social media for any personal discussions or for any individual personal matters even if initiated by other members of the academy community. Users must be directed to more appropriate communication channels.

When using social media as part of working with learners

- 1.25 Staff members must ensure that all social media use when working with learners is sanctioned by the academy; only use explicitly agreed social media; and follows agreed policies and procedures.

When using social media in staff members' wider professional life

- 1.26 Staff members must be clear that their social media content is personal and not endorsed or supported by their academy.
- 1.27 Staff members can identify their academy where appropriate but cannot use account names, academy branding, logos or anything else that could imply that the content is official academy content.

- 1.28 Staff members must be particularly careful to not reveal any details of staff members, learners, parents, carers or other members of the academy community that make it possible to identify any individuals.
- 1.29 Staff members must always use appropriate behaviour and language. As a guide, this should be similar to that which would be used when taking part in a face-to-face meeting with other education professionals.

When using social media in staff members' personal life

- 1.30 The personal use of social media must neither interfere with a member of staff's ability to maintain their professional reputation nor impact on the reputation of the academy or our trust.
- 1.31 Personal use of social media is never permitted during working hours or by means of Trust IT facilities.
- 1.32 Staff members are personally responsible for what they communicate on social media. Online profiles must be consistent with the professional image expected by our Trust and must not post material which breaches confidentiality, intellectual property and/or damages the reputation of our Trust or academy or which causes concern about their suitability to work with children and young people.
- 1.33 Staff members must not use academy social networking accounts for personal content.
- 1.34 Staff members must respect the wishes and privacy of any other members of their academy community with whom they have personal social media contact.
- 1.35 Staff members must not use personal social media with any child or young person with whom they solely have, or have had, a staff member/learner relationship. This includes ex-learners until they reach the age of 18.
- 1.36 Academy staff members can have social media contact with learners or ex-learners where other appropriate relationships exist. As examples, a learner who is also a family member or a family friend. These relationships must be open and transparent. The staff member must report these social media relationships to senior leaders for their own protection.
- 1.37 Staff members must retain any communications to learners or ex-learners rejecting any approaches made on social media and ensure that they are professional in tone. Staff members must also report these to senior leaders to ensure transparency.
- 1.38 Staff members must not use personal social media with anyone with whom they solely have a staff member/parent or carer relationship.
- 1.39 Staff members at academies can often have more complex relationships than just being a member of staff or a parent or carer. As examples, staff members can also be parents or carers (of learners at the academy), in relationships or have friendships with other staff members, parents or carers; or also governors or trustees. Any member of staff should report any social media relationships to senior leaders for their own protection.
- 1.40 Staff members must make sure that their personal social media activities take into account who they have social media relationships with, particularly any other members of the academy community, and moderate their social media behaviour accordingly.

Monitoring use of social media on academy or trust equipment

- 1.41 Our Trust and academies reserve the right to monitor all staff internet use, including when staff members are making personal use of social media, on any academy systems or equipment.
- 1.42 Misuse of social media, even personal use, on academy or trust equipment is a breach of the Acceptable Use Policy.

Disciplinary action over social media use

- 1.43 All staff members are required to adhere to this policy. Staff members should note that any breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action. Serious breaches of this policy, for example incidents of bullying of colleagues or social media activity causing serious reputational damage to the academy or trust, may constitute gross misconduct and lead to summary dismissal.

- 1.44 Similarly, where there is a serious breach of this policy, action may be taken in respect of other individuals who are not employees (e.g. volunteers or agency staff members) which may result in the ending any agreed arrangements.

If you have any concerns

- 1.45 When using social media, you may have a concern about what you are seeing or being told by another user which has safeguarding implications or may cause harm to the reputation of the academy, trust and/or its community. If you have any such concerns, you should contact the Principal or CEO, the named safeguarding contact in the academy, or Human Resources for advice.
- 1.46 If a member of staff becomes aware that a learner (or group of learners) or a parent or a carer has made inappropriate/insulting/threatening comments about them, or other staff members, on a social networking site; then they should consider reporting this to the Principal so that the appropriate process can be followed and support can be offered to the employee.