



**ALL SAINTS**  
Multi Academy Trust

# Use of Social Media Policy

<b>Review Period:</b>	<b>Annually</b>
<b>Person Responsible For Policy:</b>	<b>Trust Network Manager</b>
<b>Governing Committee:</b>	<b>Trust Board</b>
<b>Date of Trustees Approval:</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Date for Review:</b>	<b>2023</b>

## **1. Introduction**

- a. All Saints Multi Academy Trust encourages the use of social media for communicating with pupils, parents and the wider community for business related purposes.
- b. The Trust Board is committed to ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in connection with the use of social networking sites. It recognises that the use of such sites has become a very significant part of life for many people. They provide a positive way to keep in touch with family, friends and colleagues, and can be used to exchange ideas and thoughts on common interests.
- c. The aim of this policy is to clearly outline what the Trust, schools and their governing bodies consider to be acceptable, unacceptable and forbidden use of social media.
- d. For the purposes of this document, “social media” refers to websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking, and may include (but is not limited to): blogs; wikis; social networking sites; forums; bulletin boards; online gaming; apps; video/photo sharing sites; chatrooms and instant messenger.
- e. The aim is not to impose unnecessary restrictions, but rather to ensure that all users and management are fully aware of the rules surrounding the use of social media and to enable them to make safe and appropriate use of it.
- f. The Trust Board will ensure that all staff are made aware of this policy and any other related ICT protocols. This policy will be easily accessible to staff and the relevant Head of School will make any new or temporary staff aware of this policy.
- g. All users have a responsibility to use social media safely, securely, efficiently and in a professional and lawful manner.
- h. Responsibility for the enforcement of the guidance is the combined responsibility of all school employees and users and their managers.

## **2. To whom does this policy apply?**

- a. This policy applies to all employees, governors and volunteers at the school.

## **3. Aims**

- a. to enable staff and volunteers to use social networking sites safely and securely
- b. to ensure staff and volunteers are aware of the risks associated with inappropriate use of social networking sites
- c. to safeguard staff and volunteers with respect to the use of social networking sites and make sure they do not make themselves vulnerable
- d. to ensure the Trust Board maintains its duty to safeguard students and the reputation of the school
- e. to ensure duty of care towards staff and volunteers adversely affected

#### **4. Responsibilities**

- a. The Trust Board will:
  - i. ensure this policy is implemented
  - ii. ensure that all staff and volunteers have access to this policy and all new employees and volunteers are made aware of it
  - iii. seek professional advice and support from an HR advisor when necessary.
  - iv. take appropriate action, up to and including referring the matter to the police in the case of staff and volunteers being subjected to abuse on social media.
- b. The Head of School, in conjunction with the Executive Headteacher and Trust Director of Finance and Resources will:
  - i. know this policy and make sure that staff and volunteers also understand the policy and their own responsibilities
  - ii. ensure that staff and volunteers understand the risks of the use of social networking sites and the possible implications of inappropriate use
  - iii. instigate disciplinary procedures where appropriate
  - iv. seek advice from an HR advisor where necessary in the case of potential misuse
- c. Staff will:
  - i. behave responsibly and professionally in connection with their use of social networking sites
  - ii. co-operate with the and Trust Board and Leadership Team in implementing this policy

#### **5. Expectations**

- a. All members of The Trust are expected to engage in social media in a positive, safe and responsible manner.
- b. All members of The Trust are advised not to publish specific and detailed private thoughts, concerns, pictures or messages on any social media services, especially content that may be considered threatening, hurtful or defamatory to others.
- c. We will control student and staff access to social media whilst using setting provided devices and systems on site.
  - i. the use of social media during setting hours for personal use is not permitted.
  - ii. inappropriate or excessive use of social media during setting hours or whilst using setting devices may result in disciplinary or legal action and/or removal of internet facilities.
- d. The Trust Board expect staff to keep a professional distance from students and to make a clear separation between their private social lives and those of students. Social networking between staff and students is prohibited. The exception to this is where the Academy uses social networking sites as a communication tool with parents, the community and the wider population.
- e. Concerns regarding the online conduct of any member of The Trust community on social media, should be reported to the DSL (or deputy) and will be managed in accordance with our anti-bullying, allegations against staff, behaviour and child protection policies.

## 6. Staff Personal Use of social media

- a. The safe and responsible use of social networking, social media and personal publishing sites will be discussed with all members of staff as part of staff induction and will be revisited and communicated via regular staff training opportunities.
- b. Safe and professional behaviour will be outlined for all members of staff (including volunteers) as part of our code of conduct/behaviour policy as part of acceptable use policy.

### *Reputation*

- c. All members of staff are advised that their online conduct on social media can have an impact on their role and reputation within the setting.
- d. Civil, legal or disciplinary action may be taken if staff are found to bring the profession or institution into disrepute, or if something is felt to have undermined confidence in their professional abilities.
- e. All members of staff are advised to safeguard themselves and their privacy when using social media sites. Advice will be provided to staff via staff training and by sharing appropriate guidance and resources on a regular basis. This will include (but is not limited to):
  - i. Setting the privacy levels of their personal sites.
  - ii. Being aware of location sharing services.
  - iii. Opting out of public listings on social networking sites.
  - iv. Logging out of accounts after use.
  - v. Keeping passwords safe and confidential.
  - vi. Ensuring staff do not represent their personal views as that of the setting.
- f. Members of staff are encouraged not to identify themselves as employees of The Trust on their personal social networking accounts; this is to prevent information on these sites from being linked with the setting, and to safeguard the privacy of staff members.
- g. All members of staff are encouraged to carefully consider the information, including text and images, they share and post online and to ensure that their social media use is compatible with their professional role and is in accordance our policies and the wider professional and legal framework.
- h. Information and content that staff members have access to as part of their employment, including photos and personal information about students and their family members or colleagues will not be shared or discussed on social media sites.
- i. Members of staff will notify the Leadership Team immediately if they consider that any content shared on social media sites conflicts with their role.

### *Communicating with students and parents and carers*

- j. All members of staff are advised not to communicate with or add as 'friends' any current or past students or their family members via any personal social media sites, applications or profiles.
  - i. Any pre-existing relationships or exceptions that may compromise this, will be discussed with DSL (or deputies) and/or the headteacher.
  - ii. If ongoing contact with students is required once they have left the setting, members of staff will be expected to use existing alumni networks or use official setting provided communication tools.
- k. Staff will not use personal social media accounts to contact students or parents, nor should any contact be accepted, except in circumstance whereby prior approval has been given by the headteacher/manager.
- l. Any communication from students and parents received on personal social media accounts will be reported to the DSL (or deputies).

## **7. Students Personal Use of social media**

- a. Safe and appropriate use of social media will be taught to students as part of an embedded and progressive education approach, via age-appropriate sites and resources.
- b. We are aware that many popular social media sites state that they are not for children under the age of 13, therefore we will not create accounts specifically for students under this age.
- c. Any concerns regarding student's use of social media will be dealt with in accordance with existing policies, including anti-bullying, behaviour and Acceptable Use Policies.
  - i. Concerns will be shared with parents/carers as appropriate, particularly when concerning underage use of social media sites, games or tools and the sharing of inappropriate images or messages that may be considered threatening, hurtful or defamatory to others.
- d. Students will be advised:
  - i. to consider the benefits and risks of sharing personal details on social media sites which could identify them and/or their location.
  - ii. to only approve and invite known friends on social media sites and to deny access to others by making profiles private. o Not to meet any online friends without a parent/carer or other responsible adult's permission and only when a trusted adult is present.
  - iii. to use safe passwords.
  - iv. to use social media sites which are appropriate for their age and abilities.
  - v. how to block and report unwanted communications. 18th November 2021  
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  - vi. how to report concerns both within the setting and externally.
  - vii. to remove a social media conversation thread if they are the administrator of such a thread that may have been used in an inappropriate way such as with threatening, hurtful or defamatory content.

## **8. Official Use of social media**

- a. The official use of social media sites only takes place with clear educational or community engagement objectives, with specific intended outcomes.
  - i. the official use of social media as a communication tool has been formally risk assessed and approved by the Headteacher.
  - ii. Leadership staff have access to account information and login details for our social media channels, in case of emergency, such as staff absence.
- b. Official social media channels have been set up as distinct and dedicated social media sites or accounts for educational or engagement purposes only.
  - i. Staff use setting provided email addresses to register for and manage any official social media channels.
  - ii. Official social media sites are suitably protected and linked to our website.
  - iii. public communications on behalf of the setting will, where appropriate and possible, be read and agreed by at least one other colleague.
- c. Official social media use will be conducted in line with existing policies, including anti-bullying, image/camera use, data protection, confidentiality and child protection.
  - i. All communication on official social media platforms will be clear, transparent and open to scrutiny.
- d. Parents/carers and students will be informed of any official social media use, along with expectations for safe use and action taken to safeguard the community.
  - i. Only social media tools which have been risk assessed and approved as suitable for educational purposes will be used.

- ii. Any official social media activity involving students will be moderated if possible.
- e. Parents and carers will be informed of any official social media use with students; written parental consent will be obtained, as required.
- f. We will ensure that any official social media use does not exclude members of the community who are unable or unwilling to use social media channels.

#### *Staff expectations*

- g. Members of staff who follow and/or like our official social media channels will be advised to use dedicated professional accounts, where possible, to avoid blurring professional boundaries.
- h. If members of staff are participating in online social media activity as part of their capacity as an employee of the setting, they will:
  - i. sign our social media acceptable use policy.
  - ii. Always be professional and aware they are an ambassador for the setting.
  - iii. Disclose their official role but make it clear that they do not necessarily speak on behalf of the setting.
  - iv. Always be responsible, credible, fair and honest, and consider how the information being published could be perceived or shared.
  - v. Always act within the legal frameworks they would adhere to within the workplace, including libel, defamation, confidentiality, copyright, data protection and equalities laws.
  - vi. Ensure that they have appropriate consent before sharing images on the official social media channel.
  - vii. Not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of the setting, unless they are authorised to do so.
  - viii. Not engage with any direct or private messaging with current, or past, students, parents and carers.
  - ix. Inform their line manager, the DSL (or deputies) and/or the headteacher of any concerns, such as criticism, inappropriate content or contact from students.

### **9. Breaches of the Policy**

- a. The Trust Board does not discourage staff from using social networking; however staff should be aware that they will take inappropriate use of social networking seriously. Any posts or comments which could be deemed online bullying or harassment will be dealt with in the same way as other instances of bullying or harassment.
- b. The Trust Leadership Team may take disciplinary action in the case of allegations of inappropriate use of social networking, depending on the seriousness of the allegations.
- c. There may be instances where the school would be obliged to inform the police of any activity or behaviour where there are concerns about its legality
- d. From time to time, staff and volunteers at school may be subject to abuse on social networking sites in connection with their role in school. Any such abuses should be reported immediately to the Head of School, who will inform governors and take whatever action is possible to deal with the situation and support the affected colleagues.

## **10. Legislation**

- a. This policy has taken account of the following legislation:
  - i. Human Rights Act 1998
  - ii. Data Protection Act 1998
  - iii. Freedom of Information Act 2000
  - iv. Computer Misuse Act 1990, amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006