Social Media Policy

28th January 2019

Social Media Policy

Version: V1.0
Type: Trust Policy
Author: Rebecca Leek
Date approved: 28 January 2019
Approval level: Executive

CONTENTS

1.1 Introduction

Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to interact directly with each other. This can also include some games, for example Minecraft; video sharing platforms such as YouTube; internet forums, chatrooms and blogs. Given the dynamic and rapid development of social media, it is impossible to list all possible types of media and platforms. Therefore it should be assumed that all online activity is covered by this policy. Employees, parents, carers, pupils, governors and trustees should follow these guidelines in relation to any social media that they use, both at work and at home.

1.2 Purpose

ASSET Education recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers and the advantages of using social media platforms for networking and developing knowledge and expertise. However, there are risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and reputational damage. This policy aims to provide a framework for the safe and appropriate use of social media by trust staff, parents, carers, children, trustees and governors.

1.3 Scope

When considering this policy, the following policies should also be taken into account:
- Staff code of conduct
- Acceptable use of technology agreement
- Home school agreement
- Governor handbook
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Data protection policy

This policy:

- applies to all staff, pupils, parents/carers, family members of pupils, governors and trustees and to all online communications which directly or indirectly, represent the school or trust;
- applies to such online communications posted at any time and from anywhere;
- applies to the use of social media platforms by pupils within school;
- encourages the safe and responsible use of social media.

The trust respects privacy and understands that staff, governors, trustees, parents/carers and pupils may use social media forums in their private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the school or trust's reputation are within the scope of this policy.

Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on a trust or school account, or using the trust or school name. *All* professional communications are within the scope of this policy.

1.4 Equity of Access

All staff should be aware that some children or adults (parents, families or other staff members) will not have access to or will choose not to use social media platforms. Staff should ensure that no pupil is placed at a disadvantage because of this. Staff should be aware of the risk of excluding some children when providing information or opportunities that are exclusively available on social media and use alternative means of communication in addition to using online platforms.

1.5 Terms of Use

Social media must not be used for:

- Making comments, posting content or linking to materials that may bring the school or trust into disrepute
- Publishing confidential or sensitive material
- Acting maliciously towards or harassing groups or individuals
- Posting content which may be seen as acts of of defamation, discrimination, or breach of copyright or data protection
- Airing internal grievances about the school or trust

Under GDPR all parties have a duty to protect an individual's personal data. Unless explicit permission has been granted, individuals should not be named or referred to in such a way that they can be identified by others in any social media post made by any parties covered in this policy.

2.1 Guidance for staff

- Staff must never add pupils as 'friends' into their personal accounts (including past pupils under the age of 18)
- Staff should never interact with pupils and parents on social media unless within agreed and secure channels such as Class Dojo, Tapestry and secure, moderated Facebook groups
- Staff are strongly advised not to add parents as 'friends' to their personal accounts
- Staff must not use social networking sites within lesson times (for personal use)
- Staff must always consider the reputational impact on the school or trust when posting or commenting on social media
- Staff must not use social media to address concerns or complaints relating to school or trust matters
- Staff should be aware that their out-of-work social media activity could cause potential embarrassment or damage to the employer and may result in disciplinary action
- Staff should only use social networking in a way that does not conflict with current National Teaching Standards
- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give themselves appropriate levels of privacy and confidentiality

It is illegal for an adult to network falsely giving their age and status as a child.

2.2 Guidance for governors and trustees

- Governors and trustees should consider the guidelines outlined for staff and take these into account when using social media
- Governors and trustees should consider themselves representatives of the school/trust and therefore should always consider the reputational impact on the school/trust when posting or commenting on social media

2.3 Guidance for pupils

- Social networking sites should not be used/accessed in school unless under the direction of a teacher and for a clearly apparent educational purpose/experience
- Children under the age of 13 are not permitted to register themselves on social media platforms
- Any incident of a pupil discovered to be acting maliciously or harassing peers online will be treated extremely seriously as is covered in the behaviour policy
- Pupils are encouraged to report incidents of online bullying (cyberbullying) or improper contact and should feel confident that matters will be dealt with very seriously

2.4 Guidance for parents/carers and families of pupils

- Parents/carers and families of pupils should not use social media channels to raise issues or complaints, rather they should make direct contact with the school as per the school's policies
- Parents/carers and family members must not post pictures of pupils, other than of their own children, on social networking sites where these photographs have been taken on a school site or at a school event

2.5 Child Protection Guidance

If the DSL or head teacher receives notification of a disclosure that an adult employed by the Trust is using a social networking site in an an inappropriate manner they should:

- Record the disclosure in line with the child safeguarding and protection policy and act accordingly
- Refer the matter to the LADO and follow advice issued

2.6 Cyber-bullying and inappropriate use of social media

School behaviour policies outline the processes and sanctions regarding any type of bullying by a child on the school roll

In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents/carers/family members, the head teacher (or member of the trust executive) will contact the parent immediately and follow up with a letter, asking them to remove such comments and to seek redress through the appropriate channels such as the complaints policy.

In the case of inappropriate use of social media by staff, the line manager and where appropriate the head teacher will address the issue as per the disciplinary policy and the staff code of conduct.