



Social Media Policy

**In the context of this policy “everyone” refers to members of staff, governors, Friends, PTFAs, and anyone working in a voluntary capacity within the federation.*

INTRODUCTION

Social networking activities conducted online outside work, such as blogging (writing personal journals to publicly accessible internet pages), involvement in social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter etc. and posting material, images or comments on sites such as YouTube can have a negative effect on an organisation’s reputation or image. In addition, the Learn to Live Federation has a firm commitment to safeguarding children in all aspects of its work. This policy has been written to set out the key principles and code of conduct that we expect of all members of staff with respect to their responsibilities in connection with the use of social networking sites.

RATIONALE

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 we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our duties to our school, the community, our legal responsibilities and our reputation. For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice. They apply to all members of staff across the federation.

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Protect the Federation from legal risks.
- Ensure that the reputation of the school, its staff and governors is protected and not brought into disrepute.
- Further safeguard and protect all children and staff.
- Ensure that any users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the school.
- To set out the key principles and code of conduct expected of all members of staff, governors, friends and volunteers of the Learn to Live Federation with respect to social networking.

DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to: Blogs, Online discussion forums, Collaborative spaces, Media sharing services, 'Microblogging' applications, and online gaming environments. Examples include Twitter, Facebook, Skype, YouTube, Flickr, Xbox Live, Blogger, Tumblr, Last.fm, and comment streams on public websites such as newspaper sites.

Many of the principles of this policy also apply to other types of online presence such as virtual worlds.

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. They must also operate in line with the school's Equalities, Child Protection and ICT Acceptable Use Policies.

Within this policy there is a distinction between use of school-sanctioned social media for professional educational purposes, and personal use of social media.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- Everyone* in the Learn to Live Federation has a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of the Federation, and to treat colleagues and members of the Federation with professionalism and respect.
- It is important to protect everyone* in the Learn to Live Federation from allegations and misinterpretations which can arise from the use of social networking sites.
- Safeguarding children is a key responsibility of all members of staff and it is essential that everyone* in the Learn to Live Federation considers this and acts responsibly if they are using social networking sites out of school. Anyone working in the Federation either as a paid employee or volunteer must not communicate with children via social networking.

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN PRACTICE

1. Personal use of social media

- It is accepted that some staff will communicate with parents via social media either because of a pre-existing relationship, a family connection or because they work for the family in a private capacity. **In all cases staff should not make any comment which relates to the school in any way. This includes sharing of pupil and staff names. If Enabling, staff can discuss a child they are enabling for but must not mention or discuss another pupil or staff member from school in any way.**
- Any communication received from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the designated safeguarding officer.
- If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media, these must immediately be reported to the designated safeguarding officer.
- Members of school staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts.

- All email communication between staff and members of the Federation community on school business must be made from an official school email account.
- Staff must not use personal email accounts to contact members of the Federation community on school business, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances given prior approval by the Executive Head.
- Staff must consider the reputation of the Federation in any posts or comments related to the school on any social media accounts.
- Staff are strongly advised to avoid posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the Federation and members of its community on any social media accounts, other than on School Social Media accounts.
- If class teams have their own groups on WhatsApp or similar sites, these must not be used to discuss pupils. We recommend staff remain considerate and respectful when posting comments on closed groups. Staff should adhere to regular guidance provided by SLT within Staff Newsletters and also within Training on the use of such sites.
- Staff must not accept any current pupil and are strongly advised against accepting any ex-pupil of the school as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account, unless approved by SLT (an exception for example, could be close family members).
- Staff must not participate on any adult entertainment sites or include links to these types of sites which require payment to view e.g. 'Only Fans'. Staff must also consider the implications of their participation when "blogging". There must be no tenable link or association to connect the user with our Federation. If staff have any doubts about their online activities, please contact a member of SLT. Employees must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school, school community or employer into disrepute.

2. School-sanctioned Use of Social Media

There are many legitimate uses of social media within the curriculum and to support student learning. When using social media for educational purposes, the following practices must be observed:

- Staff should set up a distinct and dedicated social media site or account for educational purposes. This should be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by that member of staff, and ideally should be linked to an official school email account.
- The URL and identity of the site should be notified to the Network Manager or member of SLT before access is permitted for students.
- The content of any school-sanctioned social media site should be solely professional and should reflect well on the school.
- Staff must not publish photographs of children without the written consent of parents / carers, identify by name any children featured in photographs, or allow personally identifying information to be published on school social media accounts.
- Care must be taken that any links to external sites from the account are appropriate and safe.
- Any inappropriate comments on or abuse of school-sanctioned social media should immediately be removed and reported to a member of SLT.

- Staff must not engage with any direct messaging of students through social media where the message is not public.
- All social media accounts created for educational purposes should include a link in the About or Info page to the ICT Acceptable Use Policy on the school website. This will indicate that the account is officially sanctioned by the Learn to Live Federation.

3. Code of Conduct for Everyone* in the Learn to Live Federation

The following are **not considered acceptable** in the Learn to Live Federation:

- The use of the school's or Federation's name, logo, or any other published material without written prior permission from the Executive Head. This applies to any published material including the internet or written documentation.
- The posting of any communication or images which links the Federation to any form of illegal conduct or which may damage the reputation of the Federation. This includes defamatory comments. The disclosure of confidential or business-sensitive information; or the disclosure of information or images that could compromise the security of the Federation.
- The posting of any images of employees, children, governors or anyone directly connected with the Federation whilst engaged in school activities without the consent of a member of SLT.

In addition to the above everyone* in the Learn to Live Federation must ensure that they:

- Do not make any derogatory, defamatory, rude, threatening or inappropriate comments about the school, or anyone at or connected with the Federation.
- Use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither their personal/professional reputation, or the Federation's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings. This includes any political views which are personal and must not link or reflect whatsoever on the Federation.
- Are aware of the potential of on-line identity fraud and to be cautious when giving out personal information about themselves which may compromise their personal safety and security.

POTENTIAL AND ACTUAL BREACHES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

In instances where there has been a breach of the above Code of Conduct, the following will apply:

- Any breaches of this policy will be fully investigated. Where it is found that there has been a breach of the policy this may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure. A breach of this policy will be considered to be a serious disciplinary offence which is also contrary to the school's ethos and principles.
- The Governing Body will take appropriate action in order to protect the Federation's reputation and that of its staff, parents, governors, children and anyone else directly linked to the school.