

Social Media Policy

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 Academy, 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 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 at the Academy.

This Policy does not stand in isolation and is supported and compliant with wider Academy policy. Most significantly this policy supports and is aligned with:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy and related policies
- Disciplinary policy
- E-learning Policy and Guidance
- Whistleblowing Policies

This policy aims to:

- Enable employees to use social networking sites safely and securely
- Ensure that employees are aware of the risks associated with the inappropriate use of social networking sites
- Safeguard employees in connection with the use of social networking sites and ensure they do not make themselves vulnerable
- Ensure the Governing Body maintains its duty to safeguard all children and the reputation of the Academy and the wider community
- Ensure that the reputation of the Academy, its staff and governors is protected
- Protect the Academy from legal risks
- Ensure that any users are able clearly to distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the Academy

It is the responsibility of all members of the Academy to ensure where possible that social media is used appropriately and all concerns are reported immediately.

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, Windows Live Messenger, YouTube, Flickr, Xbox Live, Blogger, Tumblr, Last.fm, and comment streams on public websites such as newspaper site. 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 private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the Academy's Equalities, Child Protection, ICT/

Responsibilities

The Governing Body shall:

- Ensure this policy is implemented and procedures are in place that deal with the use of social networking sites.
- Ensure that all employees have access to this policy and that new employees are made aware of it.

The Headteacher and SLT shall:

- Be familiar with this policy and guidelines and ensure that employees understand the policy and their own responsibilities.
- Ensure that staff are aware of the risks of the use of social networking sites and the possible implications of the inappropriate use of them.
- Make available, where appropriate, training on social media to staff members
- Instigate disciplinary procedures where appropriate to do so.
- Seek advice where necessary from HR on the approach to be adopted if they are made aware of any potential issue.

Staff shall:

- Behave responsibly and professionally at all times in connection with the use of social networking sites.
- Co-operate with SLT in ensuring the implementation of this policy.

Personal use of social media

- Academy staff should not invite, accept or engage in communications with students and parents from the Academy community in any personal social media whilst in employment at Wood Green Academy.
- Any communication or attempted communication received from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the designated person for Child Protection.
- If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media, these must immediately be reported.
- Members of the Academy staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts.
- All email/social media communication between staff and members of the Academy community on Academy business must be made from an official Academy email or social media account.
- Staff should not use personal email accounts or mobile phones to make contact with the learners, nor should any such contact be accepted.
- If staff members would like to communicate with pupils via social media sites or to enable pupils to contact each other through Private groups, they must seek the approval of the Academy and do so using professional social media.
- If any staff member is aware of inappropriate communication it must be reported immediately to the Senior Leadership Team as sensitively appropriate. Matters that are considered to be safeguarding concerns should be recorded and discussed with the designated school Child Protection officer immediately
- Staff are advised to avoid posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the Academy and members of its community on any social media accounts.
- Staff are also advised to consider the reputation of the Academy in any posts or comments related to the Academy on any social media accounts.
- Staff should not accept any current pupil of any age or any ex-pupil of the Academy under the age of 18 as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account.
- Staff should not place inappropriate photographs on any social network space. The definition of an 'inappropriate' photograph could include, but is not limited to, any image that offends, affects safeguarding, and could affect the professional reputation of the academy or its staff or where the permission of the people pictured has not been expressly given.
- Staff should not post indecent remarks.

- If a member of staff receives messages on his/her social networking profile that they think could be from a student they must report it to their Line Manager/Principal and contact the internet service or social networking provider so that they can investigate and take the appropriate action.
- Staff are advised not to write about their work, but where a member of staff chooses to do so, he/she should make it clear that the views expressed are his/hers only and do not reflect the views of the Academy.

Monitoring the use of the internet

The academy reserves the right to monitor staff members' usage and their access to particular social media websites may be withdrawn in any case of misuse. Such misuse may result in disciplinary proceedings.

Users of email and internet services should have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send or receive using the academy's ICT system.

Academy sanctioned use of social media

There are many legitimate uses of social media within the curriculum and to support student learning. For example, the Academy has an official Twitter account, and several courses require the use of blogs for assessment. There are also many possibilities for using social media to enhance and develop students' learning.

When using social media for educational purposes, the following practices must be followed

- 1.1 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 Academy email account. The URL and identity of the site should be notified to the appropriate Head of Department or member of the SLT or Head of E-Learning before access is permitted for students.
- 1.2 Content of any Academy-sanctioned social media site should be solely professional and should reflect well on the Academy.
- 1.3 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 Academy social media accounts in line with GDPR.
- 1.4 Care must be taken that any links to external sites from the account are appropriate and safe.
- 1.5 Any inappropriate comments on or abuse of Academy-sanctioned social media should immediately be removed and reported to a member of SLT or E-Learning manager.
- 1.6 Staff should not engage with any direct messaging of students through authorised social media where the message is not public.
- 1.7 Monitoring procedures must be in place should Academy Social Media accounts be accessed and used by individuals without permission. Any instances of the inappropriate use of social networking sites are brought to the attention of the Head teacher, depending on the seriousness of the allegations, disciplinary action may be taken.
- 1.8 The Academy Disciplinary policy will be considered if an employee posts an inappropriate social media entry (e.g. tweet or Facebook entry) if it impacts on the academy (for example reputational damage) regardless of whether it was posted at work or at home. Serious breaches of this policy may constitute gross misconduct and can lead to summary dismissal.

Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the staff member involved in line with the academy's disciplinary policy. Examples include: misuse of the internet, having pupils as friends, usage which is outside the limits of personal use during the working day, breaches of confidentiality, defamation or damage to the reputation of the academy or any illegal acts that render the academy liable to third parties. There may be instances where the Academy will be obliged to inform the police of any activity or behaviour for which there are concerns as to its legality.

