



Social Media Policy

at

Weston All Saints C of E Primary School

Nurturing spiritual growth and creativity, striving for excellence as we flourish
and serve our community

Approved by: LGB

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Introduction

Social media is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other and includes for example Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. However, some games, for example Minecraft or World of Warcraft and video sharing platforms such as You Tube also have social media elements to them.

Weston All Saints C of E Primary School recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which social media offers, in particular as a powerful tool which opens up teaching and learning opportunities as well as being an integral part of our lives.

During the Covid-19 pandemic schools have moved to remote learning to provide education for children isolating and during the Lockdowns. This has meant using additional digital technology including apps like Class Dojo to enable teaching staff to maintain contact with their classes and provide support for their learning. DfE guidance has been followed to minimize as far as possible the risk pupils have been exposed to through greater reliance on remote learning and information has been made available to parents and carers to build awareness of the issues of online safety.

1. Aims and Objectives

1.1 Aims and Objectives

1.1.1 Staff, parents/carers and pupils/students are actively encouraged to find creative ways to use social media. However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This policy aims to:

- assist those defined in paragraph 1.2.1 below working with pupils to work safely and responsibly with the internet and other communication technologies and to monitor their own standards and practice;
- set clear expectations of behaviour and/or codes of practice relevant to social networking for educational, personal or recreational use;
- give a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that, where appropriate, disciplinary or legal action will be taken;
- support safer working practice;
- minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against adults who work with pupils;
- prevent adults abusing or misusing their position of trust.

1.1.2 Whilst every attempt has been made to cover a wide range of situations, it is recognised that this policy cannot cover all eventualities. There may be times when professional judgements are made in situations not covered by this document, or which directly contravene the standards outlined in this document. It is expected that in these circumstances staff in schools will always advise their Headteachers of the justification for any such action already taken or proposed. Headteachers will in turn seek advice from the Schools' HR Provider where appropriate.

1.1.3 This policy takes account of employment legislation and best practice guidelines in relation to the use of social media in addition to the legal obligations of governing bodies and the relevant legislation listed at Section 3.

The internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media – the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium. When using social media, staff should be aware of the potential impact on themselves and the employer, whether for work-related or personal use; whether during working hours or otherwise; or whether social media is accessed using the employer’s equipment or using the employee’s equipment. Staff should use discretion and common sense when engaging in online communication. There are some general rules and best practice in the appendix which staff may find helpful.

- The purpose of this policy is to encourage good practice, to protect the school and its employees, and to promote the effective use of social media as part of the school activities.
- This policy covers personal and professional use of social media and aims to encourage its safe use by the school and its employees.
- The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using the school’s IT facilities and equipment, or equipment belonging to members of staff.
- Personal communications via social media accounts that are likely to have a negative impact on professional standards or the school’s reputation are within the scope of this policy.
- This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including full-time and part-time employees, fixed-term employees and agency workers.

Main Body of Policy

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 This policy applies to all adults who work in the school. This includes teachers, support staff, supply staff, governors, contractors and volunteers. Sections have been included to cover the appropriate use of Social Media by parents and carers.

1.2.2 It should be followed by any adult whose work brings them into contact with pupils. References to adults should be taken to apply to all the above groups of people in schools. Reference to pupils means all pupils at the school (including those over the age of 18).

1.2.3 This policy should not be used to address issues where other policies and procedures exist to deal with them. For example, any alleged misconduct which falls within the scope of the management of allegations policy requires the school to comply with additional child protection requirements as set out in that policy.

1.3 Status

1.3.1 This document sits alongside the relevant school’s safeguarding policies and codes of conduct. The Local Safeguarding Children’s Board and The Partnership Trust support the use of Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with pupils in education settings.

1.4 Principles

- Adults who work with pupils are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Adults in schools should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.
- Adults in schools should continually monitor and review their practice in terms of the continually evolving world of social media and ensure they follow the guidance contained in this document.

Section 2: Safer Social Media Practice in Schools

2.1 Communication with children (including the use of technology)

- 2.1.1 In order to make the best use of the many educational and social benefits of new and emerging technologies, pupils need opportunities to use and explore the digital world. Online safety risks are posed more by behaviours and values than the technology itself.
- 2.1.2 Staff should ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours, working to local and national guidelines and acceptable use policies which detail how new and emerging technologies may be used.
- 2.1.3 Communication with pupils both in the 'real' world and through web based and telecommunication interactions should take place within explicit professional boundaries in line with Safer Working Practices.
- 2.1.4 Staff and those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 should not request or respond to any personal information from pupils other than that which may be necessary in their professional role. They should ensure that their communications are open and transparent and avoid any communication which could be interpreted as 'grooming behaviour'.
- 2.1.5 Staff and those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 should not give their personal contact details to pupils for example, e-mail address, home or mobile telephone numbers, details of web based identities. If children locate these by any other means and attempt to contact or correspond with the adult, the adult should not respond and must report the matter to their line manager/the school's Headteacher. The pupil should be firmly and politely informed that this is not acceptable.
- 2.1.6 Staff and those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 should, in any communication with pupils, also follow the guidance in section 7 'Standards of Behaviour' of 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those Working with Children and Young People in Education Settings (May 2019 and any updates thereto)'.
- 2.1.7 Staff and those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 should adhere to the school's policies and those of The Partnership Trust, including those with regard to communication with parents and carers and the information they share when using the internet.

2.2 Overview and expectations

- 2.2.1 All adults working with pupils have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of pupils. It is therefore expected that they will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their colleagues, pupils or students, public in general and all those with whom they work in line with the school and Trust's code of conduct. Adults in contact with pupils should therefore understand and be aware

that safe practice also involves using judgement and integrity about behaviours in places other than the work setting.

2.2.2 The guidance contained in this policy is an attempt to identify what behaviours are expected of adults within the school setting who work with or have contact with pupils. Anyone whose practice deviates from this document and/or their professional or employment-related code of conduct may bring into question their suitability to work with children and young people and may result in disciplinary action being taken against them.

2.2.3 Adults within the school should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour, during their use of the internet and other communication technologies, which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and record any incident in line with the school's reporting procedures or directly to their line manager/Headteacher.

2.2.4 The school also holds an internal Acceptable Use Policy.

2.3 Safer online behaviour

2.3.1 Managing personal information effectively makes it far less likely that information will be misused.

2.3.2 In their own interests, adults within school settings need to be aware of the dangers of putting personal information onto social networking sites, such as addresses, home and mobile phone numbers. This will avoid the potential for pupils or their families or friends having access to staff outside of the school environment. It also reduces the potential for identity theft by third parties.

2.3.3 All adults, particularly those new to the school setting, should review their social networking sites when they join the school to ensure that information available publicly about them is accurate and appropriate. This includes any photographs that may undermine their professional position if they are published outside of the site.

2.3.4 Staff and all adults referred to in paragraph 1.2.1 should not seek to communicate/make contact or respond to contact with pupils outside of the purposes of their work or role within the school.

2.3.5 Staff and all adults referred to in paragraph 1.2.1 should not give out their personal details.

2.3.6 Staff and all adults referred to in paragraph 1.2.1 should use only equipment and internet services provided by the school or setting in the course of their role within the school.

2.3.7 The school's Acceptable Use policy should be followed by all of those to which it applies.

2.3.8 Staff and those adults referenced in paragraph 1.2.1 should ensure that their use of technologies could not bring the school or The Partnership Trust into disrepute.

2.3.9 Confidentiality needs to be considered at all times. Social media has the potential to discuss inappropriate information and employees need to ensure that they do not put any confidential information on their site about themselves, their employer, their colleagues, pupils or members of the public. All adults referenced in paragraph 1.2.1 must ensure that they do not put any confidential information on their site about the School and The Partnership Trust, their employees or pupils.

2.3.10 Employees and those adults referenced in paragraph 1.2.1 need to ensure that when they are communicating about others, even outside of work, that they give due regard to the potential for defamation of character. Making allegations on social media (even in their own time and in their

own homes) about other employees, pupils or other individuals connected with the school, or another school, or The Partnership Trust could result in formal action being taken against them.

2.3.11 Staff and those adults set out in paragraph 1.2.1 are also reminded that they must comply with the requirements of equalities legislation in their on-line communications.

2.3.12 Staff and those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 must never post derogatory remarks or offensive comments on-line or engage in on-line activities which may bring the school or The Partnership Trust into disrepute or could reflect negatively on their professionalism.

2.3.13 Some social media sites and other web-based sites have fields in the user profile for job title etc. If you are an employee of a school and particularly if you are a teacher/teaching assistant, you should not put any information onto the site that could identify either your profession or the school where you work. In some circumstances this could damage the reputation of the school, The Partnership Trust or the profession.

2.4 Protection of personal information

Staff and those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 in schools should:

2.4.1 never share their work log-ins or passwords with other people;

2.4.2 keep their personal phone numbers private;

2.4.3 not give their personal e-mail addresses to pupils or parents. Where there is a need for homework to be sent electronically the school e-mail address should be used;

2.4.4 understand who is allowed to view the content on their pages of the sites they use and how to restrict access to certain groups of people.

Staff and those adults defined in paragraph should **not**:

2.4.5 use school ICT equipment for personal use, e.g. camera or computers;

2.4.6 use their own mobile phones to contact pupils or parents.

2.5 Communication between pupils/adults working in school

2.5.1 The school normally provides a work mobile and e-mail address for communication between staff and pupils where this is necessary for particular trips/assignments. Adults should not give their personal mobile numbers or personal e-mail addresses to pupils or parents for these purposes.

2.5.2 Staff and those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 should not request, or respond to, any personal information from a pupil, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role.

2.5.3 Staff and those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny. They should also be circumspect in their communications with pupils so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as 'grooming' in the context of sexual offending.

2.5.4 Staff and those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 should not give their personal contact details to pupils including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with senior management and parents/carers.

2.5.5 E-mail or text communications between a staff member or those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 and a pupil outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet based web sites. Internal e-mail systems should only be used in accordance with the school's policy.

2.6 Social contact

2.6.1 Staff or those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 should not establish or seek to establish social contact via social media/other communication technologies with pupils.

2.6.2 There will be occasions when there are social contacts between pupils and staff/those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1, where for example the parent and teacher are part of the same social circle or are related. These contacts however, will be easily recognised and should be openly acknowledged with the Headteacher where there may be implications for the adult and their position within the school setting.

2.6.3 There must be awareness on the part of those working with or in contact with pupils that some social networking contacts, especially where these are not common knowledge, can be misconstrued as being part of a grooming process. This can also apply to social networking contacts made through outside interests or through the adult's own family.

2.7 Access to inappropriate images and internet usage

2.7.1 There are no circumstances that will justify adults possessing indecent images of children. Staff or those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 who access and possess links to such websites will be viewed as a significant and potential threat to children. Accessing, making and storing indecent images of children is illegal. This will lead to criminal investigation and, where appropriate, disciplinary action being taken.

2.7.2 Staff or those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 should not use equipment belonging to their school/service to access any adult pornography; neither should personal equipment containing downloaded images be brought into the workplace. This will raise serious concerns about the suitability of the adult to continue to work with children.

2.7.3 Staff and those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 should ensure that pupils are not exposed to any inappropriate images or web links. Schools need to ensure that internet equipment used by pupils has the appropriate controls with regard to access. e.g. personal passwords should be kept confidential.

2.7.4 Where indecent images of children are found, the police and Local Authority designated officer (LADO) should be immediately informed. Schools should refer to the dealing with allegations of abuse policy and should not attempt to investigate the matter or evaluate the material themselves, as this may lead to evidence being contaminated which in itself can lead to a criminal prosecution.

2.7.5 Where other unsuitable material is found, which may not be illegal but which raises concerns about that member of staff, Trust HR or the LADO should be informed and advice sought. Schools should refer to the dealing with allegations of abuse against adults policy and should not attempt to investigate or evaluate the material themselves until such advice is received.

2.8 Online bullying

- 2.8.1 Online bullying can be defined as ‘the use of modern communication technologies to embarrass, humiliate, threaten or intimidate an individual in the attempt to gain power and control over them.’
- 2.8.2 Prevention activities are key to ensuring that adults are protected from the potential threat of online bullying. All adults are reminded of the need to protect themselves from the potential threat of online bullying. Following the advice contained in this guidance should reduce the risk of personal information falling into the wrong hands.
- 2.8.3 If online bullying does take place, employees/adults should keep records of the abuse, text, e-mails, website or instant message and should not delete texts or e-mails and are advised to take screen prints of messages or web pages and be careful to record the time, date and place of the site.
- 2.8.4 Adults may wish to seek the support of their trade union or professional association representatives or another colleague to support them through the process. Staff will also have access to the Health Assured Employee Assistance Programme, telephone 0800 030 5182, a free 24 hour confidential counselling and advisory service, (subject to appropriate funding arrangements).
- 2.8.5 Adults are required to report all incidents of online bullying to their line manager or the Headteacher. All such incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with in consideration of the wishes of the person who has reported the incident. It is for the individual who is being bullied to decide whether they wish to report the actions to the police.

Section 3: Legislation & Links with other policies

This document should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 (and any updates thereto)
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Defamation Act 2013
- Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People 2019 (and any updates thereto).

This policy is subject to the following policies from the Partnership Trust:

- Acceptable Use of the Internet and ICT agreements
- Disciplinary Policy
- Data Protection – Photograph Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Parental Code of Conduct

All staff must adhere to, and apply the principles of this document in all aspects of their work. Failure to do so may lead to action being taken under the disciplinary procedure.

Professional Communications

Roles, Responsibilities and Procedures

SLT

- addressing any concerns and/or questions employees may have on the use of social media
- operating within the boundaries of this policy and ensuring that all staff understand the standards of behaviour expected of them
- Facilitating training and guidance on Social Media use
- Developing and implementing the Social Media policy
- Taking a lead role in investigating any reported incidents
- Making an initial assessment when an incident is reported and involving appropriate staff and external agencies as required
- Receive completed applications for Social Media accounts
- Approve account creation

Administrator/Moderator of School Social Media Accounts

- Create the account following SLT approval
- Store account details, including passwords securely
- Be involved in monitoring and contributing to the account
- Control the process for managing an account after the lead staff member has left the organisation (closing or transferring)

Staff

- Know the contents of and ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies
- Attending appropriate training
- Regularly monitoring, updating and managing content he/she has posted via school accounts
- Adding an appropriate disclaimer to personal accounts when naming the school

Process for creating new accounts

The school community is encouraged to consider if a social media account will help them in their work, e.g. a history department Twitter account, or a "Friends of the school" Facebook page.

Anyone wishing to create such an account must present a business case to the Senior Leadership Team which covers the following points:

- The aim of the account
- The intended audience
- How the account will be promoted
- Who will run the account (at least two staff members should be named)
- Will the account be open or private/closed

Following consideration by the SLT an application will be approved or rejected. In all cases, the SLT must be satisfied that anyone running a social media account on behalf of the school has read and understood this policy and received appropriate training. This also applies to anyone who is not directly employed by the school, including volunteers or parents.

Behaviour Guidelines for staff

- The school requires that all users using social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies.
- Digital communications by staff must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy. Staff will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff. School social media accounts must not be used for personal gain. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the school.
- Users must declare who they are in social media posts or accounts. Anonymous posts are discouraged in relation to school activity.
- If a journalist makes contact about posts made using social media staff must follow the school media policy before responding.
- Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by the school and will be reported as soon as possible to a relevant senior member of staff, and escalated where appropriate.
- The use of social media by staff while at work may be monitored, in line with school policies. The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites. However, where excessive use is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken
- The school will take appropriate action in the event of breaches of the social media policy. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the school will deal with the matter internally. Where conduct is considered illegal, the school will report the matter to the police and other relevant external agencies, and may take action according to the disciplinary policy.

Legal considerations

- Users of social media should consider the copyright of the content they are sharing and, where necessary, should seek permission from the copyright holder before sharing.
- Users must ensure that their use of social media does not infringe upon relevant data protection laws, or breach confidentiality.

Handling abuse

- When acting on behalf of the school, handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity.
- If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, school users should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and should inform the audience exactly why the action was taken
- If you feel that you or someone else is subject to abuse by colleagues through use of a social networking site, then this action must be reported using the agreed school protocols.

Tone

The tone of content published on social media should be appropriate to the audience, whilst retaining appropriate levels of professional standards. Key words to consider when composing messages are:

- Engaging
- Conversational
- Informative
- Friendly (on certain platforms, e.g. Facebook)

Use of images

School use of images can be assumed to be acceptable, providing the following guidelines are strictly adhered to.

- Permission to use any photos or video recordings should be sought in line with the Partnership Trust's Data Protection – Photograph Policy. If anyone, for any reason, asks not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes should be respected.
- Under no circumstances should staff share or upload pupil pictures online other than via school-owned social media accounts
- Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on school social media accounts. Pupils should be appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any school list of children whose images must not be published.
- If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately.

Personal Use of Social Media

Staff

- Personal communications are those made via a personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school or impacts on the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy
- Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy
- Where excessive personal use of social media in school is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken
- The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites
- Staff should be responsible for their words and actions in an online environment. They are therefore advised to consider whether any comment, photograph or video that they are about to post on a social networking site is something that they want pupils, colleagues, other employees of the trust, or even future employers, to read. If in doubt, don't post it!
- Staff should be aware of their online reputation and recognise that their online activity can be seen by others including parents, pupils and colleagues on social media
- Staff should ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this policy and other relevant school and Trust policies

Pupils

- Staff are not permitted to follow or engage with current or prior pupils of the school on any personal social media network account
- The school's education programme should enable the pupils to be safe and responsible users of social media
- Pupils are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. Any offensive or inappropriate comments will be resolved by the use of the school's Behaviour Policy
- Pupils are provided with lessons as part of the PSHE curriculum to educate them about the need to use Social Media in a safe and appropriate way

Parents/Carers

- If parents/carers have access to a school learning platform where posting or commenting is enabled, parents/carers will be informed about acceptable use
- The school has an active parent/carer education programme which supports the safe and positive use of social media. This includes information on the website
- Parents/carers are provided with clear guidance from the school about who to contact if they have a problem which they would like to discuss. They are informed that Social Media is **not** the appropriate place to discuss school issues
- Parents/Carers are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. In the event of any offensive or inappropriate comments being made, the school will ask the parent/carer to remove the post and invite them to discuss the issues in person. If necessary, they will refer parents to the school's complaints procedures

Monitoring posts about the school

As part of active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to pro-actively monitor the Internet for public postings about the school.

The school/academy should effectively respond to social media comments made by others according to a defined policy or process.

Safeguarding

The use of social networking sites introduces a range of potential safeguarding risks to children and young people.

Potential risks can include, but are not limited to:

- online bullying
- grooming, exploitation or stalking
- exposure to inappropriate material or hateful language
- encouraging violent behaviour, self-harm or risk taking

In order to mitigate these risks, there are steps you can take to promote safety on line:

- You should not use any information in an attempt to locate or meet a child
- Ensure that any messages, photos or information comply with existing policies

Reporting safeguarding concerns

- Any content or online activity which raises a safeguarding concern must be reported to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs S Badger or one of the DDSLs, Mrs S Halls and Mrs A Trim
- Any online concerns should be reported as soon as identified as urgent steps may need to be taken to support the child
- With regard to personal safeguarding, you should report any harassment or abuse you receive online while using your work accounts

Reporting, responding and recording cyberbullying incidents

Staff should never engage with cyberbullying incidents. If in the course of your employment with this school, you discover a website containing inaccurate, inappropriate or inflammatory written material relating to you, or images of you which have been taken and/or which are being used without your permission, you should immediately report this to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Staff should keep any records of the abuse such as text, emails, voicemail, website or social media. If appropriate, screen prints of messages or web pages could be taken and the time, date and address of site should be recorded.

Action by employer: inappropriate use of social media

Following a report of inappropriate use of social media, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will conduct a prompt investigation

If in the course of the investigation, it is found that a pupil submitted the material to the website, that pupil will be disciplined in line with the school's Behaviour Policy

The Senior Leader, where appropriate, will approach the website hosts to ensure the material is either amended or removed as a matter of urgency, i.e. within 24 hours. If the website requires the individual who is complaining to do so personally, the school will give their full support and assistance.

Checks will be carried out to ensure that the requested amendments or removals are made. If the website(s) does not co-operate, the Senior Leader will contact the internet service provider (ISP) as the ISP has the ability to block access to certain sites and, in exceptional circumstances, can close down a website.

If the material is threatening and/or intimidating, senior management will, with the member of staff's consent, report the matter to the police.

The member of staff will be offered full support and appropriate stress counselling.

2. Publication of Information

This policy will be published on our website and shared with staff via email.

5. Review of Policy

This Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Policy Revision History		
Version	Author	Approved
V. 1	K Pratt	Comenius Trust Board of Directors
V. 2 July 2021	H Folkes	Local Governing Body

Appendix 1

Guidance for adults in school on the use of Social Media

Managing your personal use of Social Media:

- “Nothing” on social media is truly private
- Social media can blur the lines between your professional and private life. Don’t use the school/academy logo and/or branding on personal accounts
- Check your settings regularly and test your privacy
- Keep an eye on your digital footprint
- Keep your personal information private
- Regularly review your connections – keep them to those you want to be connected to
- When posting online consider; Scale, Audience and Permanency of what you post
- If you want to criticise, do it politely.
- Take control of your images – do you want to be tagged in an image? What would children or parents say about you if they could see your images?
- Know how to report a problem

Managing school social media accounts

The Do’s

- Check with a senior leader before publishing content that may have controversial implications for the school
- Use a disclaimer when expressing personal views
- Make it clear who is posting content
- Use an appropriate and professional tone
- Be respectful to all parties
- Ensure you have permission to ‘share’ other peoples’ materials and acknowledge the author
- Express opinions but do so in a balanced and measured manner
- Think before responding to comments and, when in doubt, get a second opinion
- Seek advice and report any mistakes using the school’s reporting process
- Consider turning off tagging people in images where possible

The Don’ts

- Don’t make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the school/academy into disrepute
- Don’t publish confidential or commercially sensitive material
- Don’t breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation
- Consider the appropriateness of content for any audience of school/academy accounts, and don’t link to, embed or add potentially inappropriate content
- Don’t post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content
- Don’t use social media to air internal grievances

Appendix 2

Responsible use of social media – guidance for staff from the Nation Education Union

Remember that anything you post online is not really private. Below are some common sense guidelines and recommendations that staff are advised to follow to ensure responsible and safe use of social media.

- Do not add pupils as friends or contacts in your social media accounts.
- Follow this Social Media Policy.
- Always maintain professional boundaries. Do not engage in discussion with pupils online unless through official school accounts.
- Think about the potential risks: professional boundaries of adding parents to your private social media accounts (refer to policy).
- Consider using an alternative name on sites like Facebook to make it harder for pupils to find you. For example, some members use their partner's surname online but their own surname in school.
- Never post anything that is offensive or aggressive, even if you are very angry or upset. It can easily be taken out of context.
- Remember humour is relative. For example, posting images and/or text about a recent stag or hen night may be deemed inappropriate. Likewise, a few 'lighthearted' comments and/or images about colleagues or students may not be perceived as such by either subject(s) of the humour or the employer. The guiding rule is: if in doubt, don't post it.
- Make sure you regularly check and refresh your site page to ensure it is free of any inappropriate comments and/or images.
- If you are tagged in something in Facebook that you consider inappropriate, use the remove tag feature to untag yourself (for details on how to do this, refer to the Facebook help centre).
- Be cautious of accepting 'friend requests' from people you do not really know. Simply being a 'friend' of your own Facebook friend does not mean that they should automatically be given access to your information.
- Review your profile information and settings on Facebook, Twitter and other sites to ensure it is appropriate as it may be accessed by others such as colleagues, pupils, parents and potential employers.
- Check your privacy and security settings regularly, and keep your date of birth and home address to yourself. Identity theft is a growing crime and this kind of information could be used to gain access to your bank or credit card account.

- If you feel dissatisfied and wish to rant about teaching, politics and life in general, consider doing so anonymously, through a networking account or blog which cannot be attributed to you. Check that anything that you post does not identify you, your school, pupils or parents.
- Ensure that any comments and/or images could not be deemed defamatory or in breach of copyright legislation.
- Never post any information which can be used to identify a pupil.
- Do not use social media in any way to attack or abuse colleagues or air any other internal grievances.
- Do not post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content.
- Do not engage in any conduct (using personal insults, obscenities) which would not be acceptable in the workplace.
- Do not use social media to 'whistleblow' – raise concerns through the proper channels which would entitle you to legal protection (Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998).