



ST. MARY'S
ACADEMY TRUST

St Mary's Academy Trust

Social Media Policy

Date agreed by the HR Committee: October 2019

Date to be reviewed: October 2021

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of the Social Media policy is to establish clear rules on personal usage of social media. The policy aims to explain what is and is not acceptable and to remind all staff that what you say on social media sites, even outside of your working time, is not private and that we will not tolerate any comments which bring the trust, its employees or its stakeholders into disrepute or which are offensive.
- 1.2 Failure to adhere to the contents of this policy may result in disciplinary action and ultimately dismissal.

2. WHAT WE MEAN BY SOCIAL MEDIA

2.1 Social Media means:

- Social networking sites such as Facebook, Google+, Snapchat, Twitter and Instagram
- Professional networking sites such as LinkedIn
- Online chatrooms and forums
- Blogs
- Online databases such as Glassdoor, and
- Other social media such as YouTube and Flickr

3. USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO PROMOTE THE TRUST

- 3.1 We use Twitter to promote our business and share our experiences however if your job involves using social media for work purposes you **MUST** follow the following guidelines:
 - You must always seek approval from your Headteacher for each communication
 - You must always identify yourself by name and role
 - You must not contravene our equality or harassment and bullying policies, make comments which may harm the reputation of the company, its employees or stakeholders or divulge confidential information
 - You must not use the company logo and marketing material unless specifically authorised to do so
 - You must always correct any mistakes immediately you become aware of them
 - You must not say anything about a third party which might be defamatory
 - You must always use the schools Twitter account

4. PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE WORKPLACE

- 4.1 Personal use of social media in the workplace is permitted, subject to certain conditions, as detailed below. It must not be abused or overused and the company reserves the right to withdraw permission at any time.
- 4.2 The following conditions must be met for personal use to continue:
 - Use must be minimal and take place substantially outside of normal working hours, for example, breaks and lunchtime.
 - Use must not interfere with business or office commitments.
 - Use must comply with our policies including the Equal Opportunities Policy, Data Protection Policy and Disciplinary Policy.

4.3 You are also personally responsible for what you communicate on social media sites **outside the workplace**, for example at home, in your own time, using your own equipment. You must always be mindful of your contributions and what you disclose about the company.

5. POSTING RESPONSIBLE CONTENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

5.1 When using any of the social media sites detailed in section 2 your conduct may have serious consequences for the Trust, its employees, its pupils and its stakeholders.

5.2 You must comply with the following basic rules whenever you are using social media sites even if you are doing so outside of working time. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

DO:

- Remember that conversations between “friends” are not truly private and can still have the potential to cause damage. Remember that your comments can be copied or forwarded to others without your permission. Do not rely on privacy settings
- Be mindful of any pictures or messages posted whilst absent from work due to illness. Consider how these can be perceived by colleagues who are covering your work or parents/carers of children at our schools. If we feel any picture or message could be perceived negatively against the Trust in this respect, you will be asked to remove the post immediately
- Do not mention “St Mary’s Academy Trust” or the school at which you work by name in any personal messages that you post
- Say “I” rather than “We” in any context where you might be construed as talking about our organisation even if you have not named us. State that the views you are expressing are your personal ones in any situation where it could otherwise be inferred that your views are those of the company for which you work
- Report immediately to HR if you see anything on a social media site that indicates that a colleague may have breached this policy or use our whistleblowing procedure to raise any issues of malpractice – this is the appropriate channel for raising issues in the first instance NOT THE SOCIAL MEDIA SITES
- Inform your Headteacher if you see any pupil who has an account on any social media site (the age restriction on most sites is 17/18 OR 13 with parental permission, therefore none of our pupils should have an account)!
- Follow our Data Protection Policy and observe laws on copyright, trademarks, plagiarism and fair use.
- Be respectful, polite and patient when engaging in conversation on our organisation’s behalf.
- Avoid speaking on matters outside your field of expertise when possible.

DO NOT:

- Under any circumstances accept a friend request from a pupil (it is possible that they have provided falsified information in order to set up an account) as this is a serious breach of safeguarding policies
- Make any comments which could damage the Trust’s relationships with its stakeholders or the community
- Make any comments about colleagues, pupils or stakeholders which are disrespectful, insulting, offensive or discriminatory.
- Comment on any sensitive topics for example in relation to business; financial matters or pupils
- Post comments or pictures which are inconsistent with the requirements of your role or the image or characteristics it requires you to project/possess

- Post pictures of yourself wearing company uniform unless specifically instructed to do so by your Headteacher
- Use a company e-mail address to register on social media sites
- Divulge any confidential information about our organisation
- Post any reviews about the organisation its employees or pupils on Glassdoor or similar online databases
- Share intellectual property

6. LINKED IN

6.1 If you have a LinkedIn profile then you must ensure that, whenever your profile relates to your employment by us:

- It is accurate
- It does not divulge confidential or sensitive material, or material which might lower the reputation of the organisation
- You refer to the organisation and your employment in a way which is respectful
- Any contacts you make during the course of your employment belong to us, even when they are created through professional networking sites such as Linked In. We will require you to forward details to us and to delete them for your records when your employment with us ends.

7. RECRUITMENT

7.1 We may use social networking sites as recruitment aids but we will adhere to the following guidelines:

- Searches will not be carried out before candidates have been shortlisted for interview
- We will warn candidates that we may conduct searches of social media sites as part of our decision-making process
- Searches will be limited to what ostensibly looks like material that is relevant to the candidate's ability to do the job
- Candidates will be permitted to comment on any information which causes us to reject a candidate's application
- Information about a candidate's gender, ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, disability, religion or pregnancy which is revealed through any searches will not be used or disclosed
- Under no circumstances will the information gained be used to discriminate against job applicants in contravention of our equality policy

8. STAFF WHO ARE PARENTS OF PUPILS AT A TRUST SCHOOL

8.1 We expect staff to adhere to the principles of E-Safety training which is delivered throughout the Trust and that age restrictions for social media sites are adhered to with your own children i.e. age limits of 13 with parental permission.

9. BREACH OF THIS POLICY

9.1 Any breach of this policy will be taken seriously and may lead to disciplinary action. Serious breaches will be regarded as gross misconduct and may lead to immediate dismissal in accordance with our disciplinary procedure. You must remove any material posted in breach of this policy upon our request.

9.2 You must also co-operate to the fullest extent possible in any investigation into suspected breaches of this policy. This may include handing over any relevant passwords in situations where we need these in order to investigate a suspected breach.

9.3 Examples of non-conformity with the Social Media Policy include but are not limited to:

- Disregard job responsibilities and deadlines to use social media.
- Disclosing confidential information through personal or corporate accounts.
- Directing offensive comments towards other members of the online community.

10. DATA IMPACT ASSESSMENT

10.1 At all stages of the procedure data obtained will be used for the purpose for which it is intended and will be stored securely with restricted access to those involved in the process. Following the process, data will be stored on the electronic personal file for the duration of the employees’ employment with the Trust and for 6 years thereafter. The data will be destroyed at this time using a confidential shredding service.

11. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

11.1 This policy has been impact assessed by the HR Committee, if on reading this policy you feel there are any equality and diversity issues please contact St Mary’s Academy Trust who will if necessary ensure the policy is reviewed.

I have the read the Social Media Policy and agree to adhere to this. I understand that failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

Name:
Place of Work:
Signed:
Date:

(A signed copy will be retained on your secure personal file I accordance with the Trust’s Retention Schedule).

