



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Last review date	N/A New Policy
Date approved by the Trust Board	March 2023
Date for next review	Summer 2024

Document Control

Document version numbering will follow the following format. Whole numbers for approved versions, e.g. 1.0, 2.0, 3.0 etc. Decimals will be used to represent the current working draft version, e.g 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 etc. For example, when writing a procedural document for the first time the initial draft will be version 0.1.

The table below provides details of the changes made to this document, to inform those reviewing and approving the document.

Document Edition	Section	Details of Change
0.1	All	New policy

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Related policies.....	2
Relevant external documents.....	2
Policy Statement.....	2
Scope of the Policy	2
Expectations	3
Staff Personal Use of Social Media	4
Reputation.....	4
Communicating with pupils and parents and carers	4
Pupils' Personal Use of Social Media	5
Official Use of Social Media	5
Staff expectations.....	6

Introduction

Leading Edge Academies Partnership (the 'Trust') is a team of school leaders that aim to be leading the way and pioneering in their approach to education and well-being. We are a growing family of like-minded schools that offer a values-based education to the communities we serve and welcome staff, workers, pupils, parents/carers and volunteers from all ethnicities and backgrounds.

The term 'Trust Community' includes all staff, trustees, governors, pupils, parents/carers, volunteers and visitors.

Being a values-based Trust, all our actions are guided by our three 'Es' as follows:

- **Excellence** – 'Outstanding quality'
- **Evolution** – 'Continuous change'
- **Equity** – 'Fairness and social justice'

This policy is based on the value of '**Equity**'

Related policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Data Protection Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy

Relevant external documents

- Data Protection Act 2018
- Section 160 Criminal Justice Act 1988
- Computer Misuse Act 1990

Policy Statement

Social media, e.g. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and TikTok is a broad term for any kind of online platform that enables people to directly interact with each other. Leading Edge Academies Partnership (The Trust) recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. However, some games, for example Minecraft or World of Warcraft and video sharing platforms such as YouTube also have social media elements to them.

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 encourage the safe use of social media by the Trust, schools, its staff, parents/carers and children.

Scope of the Policy

This policy is subject to the school's code of conduct and acceptable use agreements.

This policy

- Applies to all Trust staff and all online communications which directly or indirectly, represent the school.
- Applies to such online communications posted at any time and from anywhere.
- Encourages the safe and responsible use of social media through training and education.
- Defines the monitoring of public social media activity pertaining to the school.

The Trust respects privacy and understands that staff 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 Trust's reputation are within the scope of this policy.

Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on the Trust or Academy's account, or using the academy's name. All professional communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications are those made via personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with, 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 communication, which does not refer to or impact upon the school, are outside the scope of this policy.

Digital communications with pupils are also considered. Staff may use social media to communicate with pupils via a school social media account for teaching and learning purposes but must consider whether this is appropriate and consider the potential implications.

Expectations

The expectations regarding the safe and responsible use of social media applies to all members of the Trust.

- The term 'social media' may include, but is not limited to blogs, wikis, social networking sites, forums, bulletin boards, online gaming, apps, video/photo sharing sites, chatrooms and instant messenger.
- All members of the Trust are expected to engage in social media in a positive, safe and responsible manner.
- All members of the Trust are advised not to publish any content that may be considered threatening, hurtful or defamatory to others.
- We will control pupil and staff access to social media whilst using school provided devices and systems.
- The use of social media during school hours for personal use is not permitted.
- Inappropriate or excessive use of social media during school hours or whilst using school devices may result in disciplinary or legal action and/or removal of internet facilities.
- Concerns regarding the online conduct of any member of the Trust on social media, should be reported to the DSL (or deputy) and will be managed in accordance with our anti-bullying, allegations against staff, behaviour and safeguarding and child protection policies.

Staff Personal Use of Social Media

The safe and responsible use of social networking, social media and personal publishing sites will be discussed with all members of staff as part of staff induction and will be revisited when required.

Safe and professional behaviour will be outlined for all members of staff (including volunteers) as part of our code of conduct and as part of the acceptable use policy.

Reputation

All members of staff are advised that their online conduct on social media can have an impact on their role and reputation within the school.

Civil, legal or disciplinary action may be taken if staff are found to bring the profession or institution into disrepute, or if something is felt to have undermined confidence in their professional abilities.

All members of staff are advised to safeguard themselves and their privacy when using social media sites. Staff need to be aware of:

- Setting the privacy levels on their personal sites.
- Awareness of location sharing services.
- Logging out of accounts after use.
- Keeping passwords safe and confidential.
- Ensuring staff do not represent their personal views as that of the school.

All members of staff are encouraged to carefully consider the information, including text and images, they share and post online and to ensure that their social media use is compatible with their professional role and is in accordance with our policies and the wider professional and legal framework.

Information and content that staff members have access to as part of their employment, including photos and personal information about pupils and their family members or colleagues, will not be shared or discussed on social media sites.

Members of staff will notify the Leadership Team immediately if they consider that any content shared on social media sites conflicts with their role.

Consent to use any photos or video recordings should be sought in line with Mounts Bay Academy's Data Protection policy. If any student or staff member for any reason asks not to be photographed or filmed, then this must be respected.

Communicating with pupils and parents and carers

All members of staff are advised not to communicate with or 'add as friends' any current or past pupils within two years of the student leaving the school.

It is possible that students' family members may be linked with staff members' profiles and staff should be aware of this. If they have any concerns or have any pre-existing relationships or exceptions that may compromise their role, this will be discussed with the DSL (or deputies) and/or the headteacher.

If ongoing contact with pupils is required once they have left the school, members of staff will be expected to use their staff work email to contact students up until at least two years after the student has left (and the student has turned 18).

Staff will not use personal social media accounts to contact pupils or parents, nor should any contact be accepted, except in circumstances whereby prior approval has been given by the headteacher/manager. Any communication from pupils received on personal social media accounts will be reported to the DSL (or deputies).

Pupils' Personal Use of Social Media

Safe and appropriate use of social media will be taught to pupils as part of an embedded and progressive education approach, via age appropriate sites and resources.

We are aware that many popular social media sites state that they are not for children under the age of 13 and the school strongly recommends that parents and carers do not create accounts specifically for pupils under this age.

Any concerns regarding pupils' use of social media will be dealt with in accordance with existing policies, including anti-bullying, safeguarding and behaviour.

Concerns will be shared with parents/carers as appropriate, particularly when concerning underage use of social media sites, games or tools.

Pupils will be advised:

- To consider the benefits and risks of sharing personal details on social media sites which could identify them and/or their location.
- To only approve and invite known friends on social media sites and to deny access to others by making profiles private.
- Not to meet any online friends without a parent/carer or other responsible adult's permission and only when a trusted adult is present.
- To use safe, difficult to guess passwords.
- To use social media sites which are appropriate for their age and abilities.
- How to block and report unwanted communications.
- How to report concerns both within the school and externally.

Official Use of Social Media

Leading Edge Academies Partnership (The Trust's) official social media channels include Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn.

Several classes, groups and bases within the school may have their own private groups for sharing activities, news, quick polls and photos with parents and carers. Parents are reminded not to share any images more widely on social media, particularly if there are other students featured in the photo.

- The official use of social media sites only takes place with clear educational or community engagement objectives, with specific intended outcomes.
- Leadership staff have access to account information and login details for all social media channels, in case of emergency, such as staff absence.
- Official social media channels have been set up as distinct and dedicated social media sites or accounts for educational or engagement purposes only.

- Staff use school provided email addresses to register for and manage any official social media channels.
- Official social media sites are suitably protected and linked to our website.
- Public communications on behalf of the school will, where appropriate and possible, be read and agreed by at least one other colleague.
- Official social media use will be conducted in line with existing policies including Anti-bullying, CCTV, ICT and Acceptable Use, Data Protection, Confidentiality and Safeguarding and Child Protection.
- All communication on official social media platforms will be clear, transparent and open to scrutiny.
- Parents/carers and pupils will be informed of any official social media use, along with expectations for safe use and action taken to safeguard the community.
- Only social media tools which have been risk assessed and approved as suitable for educational purposes will be used.
- Any official social media activity involving pupils will be moderated where possible.
- Parents/carers will be informed of any official social media use with pupils; written parental consent will be obtained, as required.
- We will ensure that any official social media use does not exclude members of the community who are unable or unwilling to use social media channels.

Staff expectations

If members of staff are participating in online social media activity as part of their capacity as an employee of the school, they will:

- Sign our ICT and Acceptable Use policy.
- Always be professional and aware they are an ambassador for the school and trust.
- Disclose their official role but make it clear that they do not necessarily speak on behalf of the school.
- Always be responsible, credible, fair and honest, and consider how the information being published could be perceived or shared.
- Always act within the legal frameworks they would adhere to within the workplace including libel, defamation, confidentiality, copyright, data protection and equality laws.
- Ensure that they have appropriate consent before sharing images on the official social media channel.
- Not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of the school or trust, unless they are authorised to do so.
- Not engage with any direct or private messaging with current, or past, pupils.
- Check privacy settings regularly.
- Inform their line manager, the DSL (or deputies) and/or the headteacher of any concerns, such as criticism, inappropriate content or contact from pupils.

Process for creating new social media accounts

The Trust considers whether a social media account will help them in their work and promote the Trust as a whole and the schools included. Anyone wishing to create such an account (e.g. Leading Edge football teams) must present a rationale to the Trust central 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

Social media tone

The tone of content published on Mounts Bay Academy social media should be appropriate to the audience and that social media platform, whilst retaining appropriate levels of professional standards.

The Trust's tone and key messages:

- Progressive
- Ambitious
- Empowering
- 'Leading the way'
- Inclusive
- Engaging

Please refer to Tone of Voice guidelines (Teams-Cat A-operational) for further information.