



Trinity MAT

Trinity Multi Academy Trust

Policy:	Social Media Policy
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Lead professional:	Chief Operating Officer/Director of ICT
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1. Introduction to social media policy

The principles set out in this policy are designed to ensure that the use of social media is responsibly undertaken and that confidentiality of students and staff and the reputation of the Trust and its Academies are protected.

For clarity social media applies to personal web space such as; social media sites (for example Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat), blogs, microblogs such as Twitter, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopedias such as Wikipedia, and content sharing sites such as flickr and YouTube or any site or service deemed as 'social media' by the Trust.

2. Legislation and guidance

All members of staff should bear in mind that information they share through social media 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 potentially other relevant legislation. Staff must also operate in line with the Trust's policies (see section x). In addition, it is important to understand that there is a distinction between use of Trust-sanctioned social media for professional educational purposes, and personal use of social media.

It is vital that every member of staff understands that students under the age of 13 should not be allowed access to, or be encouraged to create their own personal social media accounts. Children under the age of 13 are not legally allowed to use social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter.

Any communication received by staff from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the designated person for Child Protection, the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Officer. In addition, if any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media, these must immediately be reported.

3. Expected conduct on social media

It is important and expected that staff follow the following guidance:

- Staff are advised to avoid posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the Trust or Academy and members of its community on any social media accounts, unless it is an official post or retweeting academy information;
- Staff should not comment on the Trust or their Academy, or any other Trust or Academy official social media page from their personal account;
- Staff are also advised to consider the reputation of the Trust in any posts or comments related to the Trust on any social media accounts;
- Staff should not accept any current student 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, with the exception of relatives;
- Never 'friend' a student at any academy in the trust where they are working onto their social networking site;
- Be conscious at all times of the need to keep personal and professional/school lives separate;
- Individuals should not put themselves in a position where there is a conflict between the Trust and their personal interests;

- Do not make any derogatory, defamatory, rude, threatening or inappropriate comments about the Trust, or anyone at or connected with the Trust;
- Use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither their personal nor professional reputation, nor the Trust's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.

4. Inappropriate and unprofessional use of social media

It is important and expected that staff understand what is inappropriate and unprofessional use of social media and adhere to the following guidance:

- Staff should not engage in activities involving social media which might bring the Trust or a specific Academy of the Trust or any individual associated into disrepute;
- Staff should not represent their personal views as those of Trust or any Academy with the Trust on any social medium;
- Staff should not discuss personal information about other students, the Trust, any Academy of the Trust and the wider community they interact with on any social media;
- Staff should not use social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, abuse or defame students, their family members, colleagues, other professionals, other organisations or Trust;
- Staff should not identify themselves as members of Trust or any Academy of the Trust in their personal web-space, unless specifically linked to an approved job role within the Trust community where it serves a purpose to professionally market the Trust or their Academy. This is to prevent information being linked with the Trust and its Academies and to safeguard the privacy of staff members, students and parents and the wider school community;
- Students should not have contact through any personal social medium with any member of staff. If students and members of the wider Trust or individual Academy community wish to communicate with staff, they should only do so through official Trust or individual Academy sites created for this purpose;
- Photographs, videos or any other types of image of students and their families or images depicting staff members, clothing with Academy logos or images identifying Academy premises should not be published on personal or public web space without prior permission from the Trust, except for reposting of approved marketing material;
- We advise that Trust and individual Academy e-mail addresses should not be used for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.

This policy applies to **all staff** employed by our trust, and to external organisations or individuals working on our behalf. Staff who do not comply with this policy may face disciplinary action.

5. Related policies and documents

- (MAT) Code of Conduct for Staff
- (MAT) Data Protection Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures
- Safeguarding Procedures (Visitors and Volunteers)
- eSafety Policy (for Students)
- Remote Learning and Safeguarding Policy (draft)

Appendix 1: Short guide on behaviour for 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 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 appropriate.

The Don’ts

- Don’t make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the school 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 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.