

## Social Media Policy

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## **Statement of intent**

The Inclusive Multi Academy Trust understands that social media is a growing part of life inside and outside of school. We are committed to:

- Encouraging the responsible use of social media by all staff, in support of the school's mission, values and objectives.
- Preventing and avoiding damage to the reputation of the school through irresponsible use of social media

### **1. Introduction**

**1.1** This policy is in place to minimise the risks to the Trust and its schools through use of social media. This policy does not form part of any employees contract of employment and it may be amended at any time. The Trust may also vary this policy as appropriate in any case.

**1.2** This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google, Wikipedia, Whisper, Instagram, Vine, Tumblr and all other social networking sites, internet postings and blogs. It applies to use of social media for business purposes as well as personal use that may affect the school in any way.

**1.3** This policy covers all employees, members, trustees, governors, consultants, volunteers, and agency workers who will receive training as part of their induction.

### **2. Compliance with related policies and agreements**

**2.1** Social media should never be used in a way that breaches any other policies. If an internet post would breach any policy/ procedure in another forum, it will also breach them in an online forum. For example, employees are prohibited from using social media to:

- breach the Trusts Code of Conduct for employees
- breach the obligations with respect to the rules of relevant regulatory bodies
- breach any obligations contained in Trust or school policies and the Data Protection Act relating to confidentiality
- breach the disciplinary policy and procedure
- breach the bullying and harassment policy
- breach the Data Protection policy including GDPR
- Breach the Online Safety policy

**2.2** Employees should never provide professional references on behalf of the school for other individuals without the express authority of the Headteacher including on social or professional networking sites, as such references, positive and negative, can be attributed to the school and create legal liability for both the author of the reference and the school.

### **3. Personal use of social media**

Occasional personal use of social media during working hours is permitted so long as it does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content, does not interfere with employment responsibilities or productivity and complies with this policy.

### **4. Prohibited use**

**4.1** The employee must avoid making any social media communications that could damage the Trust or its school's interests or reputation, even indirectly.

**4.2** The employee must not use social media to defame or disparage the Trust or its schools, its employees or any third party; to harass, bully or unlawfully discriminate against staff or third parties; to make false or misleading statements; or to impersonate colleagues or third parties.

**4.3** The employee must not express opinions on the Trust or its school's behalf via social media, unless expressly authorised to do so.

**4.4** The employee must not post comments about sensitive Trust/school-related topics, such as the Trust/schools performance, internal issues involving pupils, parents, volunteers or employees or do anything to jeopardise the Trusts confidential information particularly with regards pupils and other employees. The employee must not include the Trust/schools logo or other trademarks in any personal social media posting or in the employee personal profile on any social media.

**4.5** Any misuse of social media should be reported to the Chief Executive Officer or the Headteacher.

### **5. Business use of social media**

**5.1** If the employee is contacted for comments about the Trust/school for publication anywhere, including in any social media outlet, the enquiry should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer or the Headteacher and the employee should not respond without written approval.

**5.2** The use of social media for business purposes is subject to the remainder of this policy.

## **6. Guidelines for responsible use of social media. Please see Appendix 1.**

- 6.1** The employee should make it clear in social media postings, or in the employees personal profile, that the employee is speaking on the employees own behalf.
- 6.2** Employees should be respectful to others when making any statement on social media and be aware that the employee is personally responsible for all communications which will be published on the internet for anyone to see. Employees should ensure that they use privacy and access settings whilst being aware that they cannot control the use of their postings by others.
- 6.3** The employee should also ensure that their profile and any content they post are consistent with the professional image the employee presents to colleagues, pupils and parents.
- 6.4** If the employee is uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, they are advised to refrain from posting it until they have discussed it with their manager.
- 6.5** If the employee becomes aware of social media content that disparages or reflects poorly on the Trust or its schools, the employee should contact the Chief Executive Officer or the Headteacher.

## **7. Monitoring**

- 7.1** The school reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, employee activities using school IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to social media postings and activities, to ensure that Trust or school rules are being complied with and for legitimate school purposes.
- 7.2** For further information, please refer to the Data Protection policy.

## **8. Breach of this policy**

- 8.1** Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- 8.2** The employee may be required to remove any social media content that the school consider to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.

## Appendix 1

### Staff guidance for using social media

These guidance notes set out the principles which staff are expected to follow when using social media both on behalf of the Trust/school and about the Trust/school. All staff must:

- act in the best interests of pupils when creating, participating in or contributing to social media sites
- avoid making any social media communications that could damage the Trust/school's interests or reputation, even indirectly
- not make false or misleading statements
- demonstrate the same high standards of behaviour as expected within the Trust/school
- not express opinions on the Trusts/school's behalf, unless expressly authorised to do so
- have due regard of Data Protection and GDPR regulations as well as other laws relating to libel, defamation, harassment, discrimination and copyright
- when posting images of pupils, refrain from using that child's name so that individuals are not easily identifiable
- when posting images of children's work, only use the child's first name so that individuals are not easily identifiable
- not publish images and videos of pupils without consent from a parent/carer
- not post comments about sensitive Trust/school-related topics, such as the Trusts/schools performance, internal disputes involving pupils, parents or employees or do anything to jeopardise the Trusts/school's confidential information particularly with regards to pupils and other employees
- make it clear in social media postings, or in the employee's personal profile, that the employee is speaking on the employee's own behalf
- be respectful to others when making any statement on social media
- be aware that the employee is personally responsible for all communications which will be published on the internet for anyone to see
- ensure that they use privacy and access settings whilst being aware that they cannot control the use of their postings by others
- ensure that their profile and any content they post are consistent with the professional image the employee presents to colleagues, pupils and parents
- discuss any concerns about the appropriateness of any statement or posting with their manager prior to posting
- contact the Chief Executive Officer or Headteacher if they become aware of social media content that disparages or reflects poorly on the school.

Please ensure you are aware of the contents of the Trusts full Social Media policy. This can be obtained from the staff policy drive or the school office.