



Social Media Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1** This policy has been produced in consultation with the professional associations/trade unions and is recommended for adoption by Aspire Academies Trust. For schools that subscribe to the schools HR advisory service an HR adviser is always available to provide guidance in relation to the implementation of this policy.
- 1.2** This policy is in place to minimise the risks to 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 school may also vary this policy as appropriate in any case.
- 1.3** 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 business the school in any way.
- 1.4** This policy covers all employees, consultants, volunteers, and agency workers.

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 code of conduct for employees in schools
 - breach the obligations with respect to the rules of relevant regulatory bodies
 - breach any obligations contained in those policies relating to confidentiality
 - breach the disciplinary policy and procedure
 - breach the bullying and harassment policy
 - breach the E-Safety and data security policy
- 2.2** Employees should never provide professional references on behalf of the school for other individuals without the express authority of the Principal 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 in the schools designated place 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 schools interests or reputation, even indirectly.

- 4.2 The employee must not use social media to defame or disparage the school, 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 schools behalf via social media, unless expressly authorised to do so.
- 4.4 The employee must not post comments about sensitive school-related topics, such as the schools performance, internal disputes involving pupils, parents or employees or do anything to jeopardise the schools confidential information particularly with regards pupils and other employees. The employee must not include the schools logo or other trademarks in any social media posting or in the employee profile on any social media.
- 4.5 Any misuse of social media should be reported to the Principal.

5. Business use of social media

- 5.1 If the employee duties require the employee to speak on behalf of the school in a social media environment, the employee must still seek approval for such communication from their manager who may require the employee to undergo training before the employee does so and impose certain requirements and restrictions with regard to the employee activities.
- 5.2 If the employee is contacted for comments about the school for publication anywhere, including in any social media outlet, the enquiry should be directed to the Principal and the employee should not respond without written approval.
- 5.3 The use of social media for business purposes is subject to the remainder of this policy.

6. Guidelines for responsible use of social media

- 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 school, the employee should contact 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 school rules are being complied with and for legitimate school purposes and the employee consents to such monitoring.

7.2 For further information, please refer to the E-Safety and data security 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.