



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

**This policy applies to all schools in
The Lionheart Educational Trust**

**Approved by Trust Board:
September 2022- September 2024**



1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The widespread availability and use of social media applications bring opportunities to understand, engage, and communicate in new and exciting ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our duties to our school, the community, our legal responsibilities and our reputation.
- 1.2 The use of online social media applications (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, SnapChat etc.) has become a very significant part of life for many people. They provide a very positive way to keep in touch with friends and colleagues, and can be used to exchange ideas and thoughts on common interests, both personal and work-related.
- 1.3 The Lionheart Educational Trust (the 'Trust') does not discourage staff and pupils from using such services. However, all should be aware that the Trust will take seriously any occasions where the services are used inappropriately.
- 1.4 The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice. They apply to all members of staff at the school.
- 1.5 The purpose of the policy is to:
 - Protect the school from legal risks
 - Ensure that the reputation of the school, its staff and governors is protected
 - Safeguard all children
 - Ensure that any users are able clearly to distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the school

2.0 Policy

- 2.1 This policy applies to all members of Staff within the Lionheart Educational Trust ("the Trust"). For the purposes of this policy, the term "Staff" means all members of Trust staff including permanent, fixed term, and temporary staff, governors, secondees, any third party representatives, agency workers, volunteers, interns, agents and sponsors engaged with the Trust in the UK or overseas. This policy also applies to all members of staff employed by any of the Trust's subsidiary companies.

3.0 Definition and Scope

- 3.1 Social networking applications include, but are not limited to: Blogs, Online discussion forums, Collaborative spaces, Media sharing services, 'Microblogging' applications, and online gaming environments. Examples include Twitter, Facebook, SnapChat, Instagram, YouTube, Flickr, Xbox Live, Blogger, Tumblr, TikTok and comment streams on public websites such as newspaper sites and BBC News.
- 3.2 Many of the principles of this policy also apply to other types of online presence such as virtual worlds.
- 3.3 All members of staff should bear in mind that information they share through social networking 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 other legislation. They must also operate in line with the school's Equalities, Child Protection and ICT Acceptable Use Policies.

3.4 Within this policy there is a distinction between the use of school-sanctioned social media for professional educational purposes, and personal use of social media

4.0 Use of Social Media in Practice

4.1 Personal Use of Social Media:

- School staff will not invite, accept or engage in communications with parents or children from any Trust school via any personal social media whilst employed by the Trust
- Any communication received from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to one of the school's Designated Safeguarding Leads
- If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media setting, these must immediately be reported as above
- Members of staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts
- Staff should make sure that their profile picture is appropriate as this can be seen by anyone even with the highest security permissions in place
- All email communication between staff and parents or children from a Trust academy must be made from an official school email account in accordance with the Electronic Communication Policy
- Staff should not use personal email accounts or mobile phones to make contact with parents or children from any Trust school on school business, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances given prior approval by the Head teacher.
- Staff are advised to avoid posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the Trust or Trust school on any social media accounts
- Staff are also advised to consider the reputation of the Trust in any posts or comments related to the Trust or Trust school on any social media accounts
- Staff should not post anything via social media that could offend any other staff member, parent of, or pupil at the school or within the Trust
- Staff should not use statements as statuses or in communication that could be misinterpreted
- Staff should not discuss any aspect of their work at all online with any persons
- Staff should not accept any current pupil or former pupil of any age of the Trust as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account
- Staff should be aware that once posted, information is no longer private as it could be shared by other users even after an account has been deleted.



- Viewing and updating personal sites should not take place during working times except when, by agreement it is relevant to teaching, learning or pupil support. Reasonable access via personal devices is acceptable before or after working hours and during work breaks.

4.2 School-Sanctioned Use of Social Media:

There are many legitimate uses of social media within the curriculum and to support student learning. For example, each Trust school has an official Twitter account and several A-level courses require the use of blogs for assessment. There are also many possibilities for using social media to enhance and develop students' learning.

When using social media for educational purposes, the following practices must be observed:

- Staff should set up a distinct and dedicated social media site or account for educational purposes. This should be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by that member of staff, and should be linked to an official school email account.
- The URL, identity and purpose of the site should be approved by the SLT before account setup is permitted.
- The content of any school-sanctioned social media site should be solely professional and should reflect well on the school.
- The site should be moderated by the member of Staff who provisioned the account. Any inappropriate comments or abuse of school-sanctioned social media should immediately be removed and reported to a member of SLT
- Staff must not publish photographs of children without the written consent of parents/carers nor should they identify by name any children featured in photographs, or allow personally identifying information to be published on school social media accounts
- Care must be taken that any links to external sites from the account are appropriate and safe
- Staff should not display social media sites directly in their lessons as this content cannot be moderated. Instead screenshots should be used to support teaching and learning.
- Staff should not engage in any direct messaging of students through social media where the message is not public
- All social media accounts created for educational purposes should include a link in the About or Info page to this Social Media Policy on the school website. This will indicate that the account is officially sanctioned by the Trust

4.3 The Trust may consider taking action, in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure, where staff do not comply with this policy

5.0 Review

5.1 This policy will be reviewed periodically as it is deemed appropriate, to take account of changes in the law and use of social media. These reviews will be no less frequently than every two years. The policy review will be undertaken by the Director of IT for the Trust and ratified by the Trust Board.