Cedars Academy
Employee Social Media Policy

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1. Introduction

1.1. Social media has transformed the way we communicate both at work and personally. Communication can now be instant and can be shared around the world, often to those we do not know. This can have its benefits but there are also risks. It is therefore important to ensure we balance this with our duties to our academy, the community, our legal responsibilities and our reputation.

2. Aim

2.1. This policy provides a framework so that all users of social media (whether at home or at work, on academy or personal equipment) are using it safely and effectively.

2.2. This policy:

- provides clarity to employees on how they should conduct themselves when using social media;
- ensures the reputation of the academy, its staff and governors is protected;
- protects the academy from legal risks;
- safeguards all children.

3. Definition

3.1. 'Social media' is the term commonly given to websites and online tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. As the name implies, social media involves the building of communities or networks, encouraging participation and engagement.

3.2. Popular social media services include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Flickr and blogs. There are many more examples of social media and this is a constantly developing area.

4. Scope

4.1. The policy applies to all employees appointed by the Governing Body of the academy.

4.2. The policy's principles should be adhered to by the academy's governing body, external contractors providing services on behalf of the academy, trainees, volunteers and any other individuals who work for or provide services on behalf of the academy where practicable.

4.3. The Governing Body accepts that employees are entitled to a private life. However, all employees must exercise professional judgement when

using social media. Employees cannot have a reasonable expectation of privacy if their use of social media impacts on the well-being of the school community.

4.4. Employees must, therefore, be aware of this policy at all times, both during working time and during an employee's own time, when using social media for both business and personal use, whether using the academy's equipment (computers, iPads, laptops, phones) or their own personal equipment.

4.5. Any information or comments relating to the academy that is shared through social media applications, even if they are on private spaces, is still subject to:

- copyright legislation;
- the Data Protection Act;
- freedom of information legislation;
- the academy's Information Security Policy;
- the academy's Employee Code of Conduct.

4.6. This policy does not form part of an employee's contract of employment and is not intended to have contractual effect. The academy reserves the right to amend its content at any time.

5. Responsibilities

5.1. The Governing Body will:

- promote high standards of professional conduct at the academy;
- ensure the academy has appropriate Child Protection policies and procedures;
- consider requests for the creation of social media sites for academy use;
- abide by all relevant legislation and, in particular, will not discriminate on grounds of race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, belief, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, trade union membership or age;
- have overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and will ensure the policy is applied consistently and fairly.

5.2. The head teacher will:

- ensure that all employees are aware of the standards of conduct expected of them;
- be familiar with all Child Protection legislation, guidance and procedures;
- support any employees who have concerns within the academy;
- nominate a suitable person to be responsible for the creation and management of social media sites for academy use.

5.3. The employee will:

- conduct themselves professionally at all times;
- use their professional judgement to avoid any reputational damage to the academy when using social media;
- report any concerns regarding use and content of social media immediately to the head teacher.

6. Accessing social media

6.1. Employees must not access social media for personal use during working time, using either academy or personal equipment (computers, iPads, laptops, phones).

6.2. Access is only permitted in an employee's own time, for example during their lunch break and in accordance with the academy's ICT policy when using academy equipment.

7. Responsibilities when accessing social media

7.1. Employees are personally responsible for the content they publish on social media both at work and outside of work using either academy or personal equipment. Employees therefore must assume that any comments may be visible to anyone in the world with an internet connection and are a permanent record and can be republished in other media.

7.2. The public must be able to trust the integrity of the academy. They need to be confident that the outside activities of employees do not undermine the academy's reputation and that decisions regarding academy matters are not perceived to be influenced by an employee's commercial, political or personal interests.

7.3. Employees when using social media for both personal and academy use must therefore:

- conduct themselves in an honest and professional manner;
- ensure that their conduct and activities do not bring the academy into disrepute;
- use their professional judgement when expressing views in order to avoid any reputational damage to the academy;
- be mindful of how their private interests may impact on their duty to the academy and therefore not put themselves in a position where their duty and private interests conflict or appear to conflict;
- not breach Data Protection or confidentiality by talking about, identifying or disclosing personally identifiable information about parents, pupils or colleagues;

- act in a transparent manner when altering online sources of information including errors about the academy;
- not post comments or photos which may be deemed offensive;
- not use official academy logos on personal web pages;
- not use personal email accounts or mobile phones to make contact with members of the school community on academy business, nor should any contact be accepted;
- not use an academy e-mail address to register on social media sites for personal use;
- not place personal postings on social media sites using their own personal mobile or device during normal working time;
- not invite or accept new 'friend' requests on Facebook on their personal profile if they are aware they are parents, or pupils (current or former under the age of 18), from the school community unless there is a previously established personal relationship;
- not allow new parents, or pupils (current or former under the age of 18), to follow them on Twitter unless there is a previously established personal relationship;
- not post personal photographs of colleagues, parents or pupils on social networking sites without the permission of the person/s photographed or their parent or guardian (for children under the age of 16).

7.4. It is an individual's responsibility to read the Terms of Service of any social networking site accessed and to ensure that any confidentiality and privacy settings outlining to whom information posted is available is understood. Employees are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts.

8. Academy sanctioned use of social media

8.1. Cedars Academy has established accounts on several social media websites. These sites include Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and YouTube. The management of these accounts and the creation of new social media accounts is the responsibility of Michelle O'Reilly (overseeing a team Naomi Parkin, Joe MacCabe and Steven Malcolm)

8.2. The academy will sanction legitimate use of social media for uses within the curriculum, to support students' learning and in exceptional circumstances. Employees can only create a social media presence on behalf of the academy with prior agreement from the Governing Body.

8.3. Employees when using social media for educational purposes must observe the following practices:

- employees should set up a distinct and dedicated social media site or account for educational purposes; this must be separate from any personal social media account and must be linked to an official academy email account;

- the content of any academy sanctioned social media site should be wholly professional and must not bring the academy into disrepute;
- employees must not publish photographs of current pupils without the written consent of their parent or guardian (for children under the age of 16);
- employees must not allow personally identifying information to be published on academy social media accounts;
- care must be taken that any links to external sites from any academy sanctioned social media account are appropriate and safe;
- all academy sanctioned social media accounts created for educational purposes should include a link to the ICT Acceptable Use Policy on the academy website**;**
- employees must ensure all email communication between themselves and members of the school community are made from an official academy email account;
- employees must make use of privacy settings on their personal social media accounts as connecting to academy social media accounts could lead to attention and scrutiny of their personal social media activity.

8.4. In exceptional circumstances the academy may post regular updates on its social media sites and employees will be informed when and where they can access these updates. Therefore, in these circumstances employees are permitted to access these sites during work time for these updates.

9. Safeguarding

9.1. When using social media sites, employees must at all times be conscious of their responsibilities to children and young people. The academy requires employees to always act in the best interests of children and young people and be alert to the risks they can be exposed to.

9.2. Children and young people may post sensitive personal information about themselves, treat online friends as real friends, be targets for grooming or become victims of cyber bullying. If pupils disclose information, display behaviour or are exposed to information or behaviour that raises safeguarding or other concerns, the academy's designated person for child protection must be informed immediately.

9.3. In addition employees must report any communication received from current pupils on any social media site to the academy's designated person for child protection.

9.4. Failure to report any safeguarding concerns could expose vulnerable young people to risk of harm.

9.5. Employees must not have any content or link to content on their personal social media sites which are abusive, obscene, sexually explicit, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory or defamatory. Such content may be seen as committing a criminal offence. If this is found to be the case the academy will have a duty to draw it to the attention of the Police.

9.6. This policy is not intended to prevent employees from using social media sites but to make them aware of the risks they could face when sharing information about their professional and/or personal life. Employees are encouraged to report any concerns that they have regarding content placed by colleagues on social media sites to the head teacher.

10. Recruitment

10.1. Any representative of the academy must not conduct searches on social media sites / internet to vet prospective employees.

10.2. Care must be taken to ensure fairness in recruitment processes, and information posted on social media about individuals may not give an accurate representation of them as a person or their capabilities.

11. Monitoring

11.1. Business and personal use of the internet from academy equipment is monitored and usernames, websites, dates and times of the visits, and the time spent at each site is recorded. Where there is reason to suspect misuse, the academy is able to access detailed reports of sites visited by employees for both personal use and school use.

12. Misuse of Social Media

12.1. Employees must be aware that the use of social media sites in a manner contrary to this policy, including if others implicate them in a breach of any of the terms listed above, may result in disciplinary action which could ultimately result in dismissal.

13. Review

13.1. This policy was agreed by the Governing Body of Cedars Academy on 1st July 2019

13.2. It is a non-contractual policy and does not form part of an employee's contract of employment.

13.3. The academy may amend it at any time.