



Social Media Policy for Staff

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Version Number	Date issued	Author	Update information
1.0	13/12/2018	N McDermott	First Published Version
1.1	07/01/2020	N McDermott	Pupil use now also included in "Code of Conduct for Parents/Carers/Visitors/Pupils and Social Media Statement"
1.2	14/12/2021	B Manning	Redefined 'social media'. Section 3 added to policy. Policy reviewed to ensure it is still compliant with legislation and guidance. Minor amendments to terminology – use of 'child/ren or young people', 'Principal' etc.

1. Expectations

- 1.1. All members of Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust community are expected to engage in social media in a positive, safe and responsible manner.
- 1.2. The policy should be read alongside the *Code of Conduct for Staff*, *Code of Conduct for Governors & Trustees* and *Visitor Code of Conduct* and the on the Trust website.
- 1.3. Social media is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. It allows people to share information, ideas and views. Examples of social media include blogs, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, Instagram, Myspace, Flickr and YouTube.
- 1.4. Members of Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust community are advised not to publish specific and detailed private thoughts, concerns, pictures or messages on any social media services, especially content that may be considered threatening, hurtful or defamatory to others.
- 1.5. Inappropriate use of social media during school hours or whilst using school devices may result in disciplinary or legal action and/or removal of internet facilities. Examples of this might include taking and uploading photos or images from within classrooms or other school settings.
- 1.6. Concerns regarding the online conduct of any member of the Trust community on social media should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and will be managed in accordance with policy for managing allegations against staff (Whistleblowing Policy) Staff, parents and governors are reminded that publication of material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who is the subject of an allegation is prohibited by law. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing including content placed on social media sites.
- 1.7. This policy will be reviewed annually to reflect the rapidly changing nature of social media.

2. Staff Personal Use of Social Media

- 2.1. The safe and responsible use of social networking, social media and personal publishing sites will be discussed with all employees as part of staff induction and will be revisited and communicated via regular staff training opportunities.
- 2.2. Safe and professional behaviour will be outlined for all members of staff (including volunteers) as part of our Code of Conduct for Staff and as part of our Acceptable Use policy.
- 2.3. All members of staff are advised that their online conduct on social media can have an impact on their role and reputation within the setting.
- 2.4. Employees must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the Trust, trust community or employer into disrepute. Civil, legal or disciplinary action may be taken if staff are found to bring the profession or institution into disrepute, or if something is felt to have undermined confidence in their professional abilities.
- 2.5. Employees should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.
- 2.6. Employees must exercise caution in their use of all social media or any other web based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts established by others. This may also include the use of dating websites where employees could encounter pupils either with their own profile or acting covertly.
- 2.7. Members of staff are encouraged not to identify themselves as employees of Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust on their personal social networking accounts; this is to prevent information on these sites from being linked with the setting, and to safeguard the privacy of staff members.
- 2.8. Employees must not respond to negative comments posted online but bring this to the attention of the Principal.
- 2.9. Members of staff are encouraged to consider what they share and post online and to ensure that their social media use is compatible with their professional role and is in accordance our policies and the wider professional and legal framework.
- 2.10. Information and content that staff members have access to as part of their employment, including photos and personal information about pupils and their family members or colleagues will not be shared or discussed on social media sites.
- 2.11. Members of staff will notify the Leadership Team immediately if they consider that any content, whether posted by them or in which they are tagged or otherwise identified, which is shared on social media sites conflicts with their role.
- 2.12. Employees must declare any relationships that they may have, in any capacity not connected with their role in school, with current pupils outside of school; this may include mutual membership of social groups e.g. sports clubs, tutoring, or family connections. Employees should not assume that the school is aware of any such connections. A declaration form is available in Appendix 2 of the Staff Code of Conduct for declaration of such relationships.

3. Acceptable use principles

- 3.1. The Trust's overarching principle concerning acceptable use is that employees should be aware that content uploaded to social media is not private. Even if it restricted it to 'friends', there is still capacity for it to be re-posted or distributed beyond the intended recipients. Therefore, employees using social media should conduct themselves with professionalism and respect.

3.2. Employees should not upload any content on to social media sites that:

- is confidential to the school/trust or its staff
- amounts to bullying
- amounts to unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- brings the school/trust into disrepute
- contains lewd, sexually explicit, threatening or similarly inappropriate or offensive comments, images or video clips
- undermines the reputation of the school and/or individuals
- is defamatory or knowingly false
- breaches copyright
- is in any other way unlawful.

4. Safeguarding

4.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Online (E) Safety Policy and Code of Conduct for Staff Policy.

5. Communicating with pupils and parents and carers

5.1. Members of staff should not communicate with or add as 'friends' any current pupils or ex pupils under the age of 18, or their family members via any personal social media sites in their capacity as members of school staff.

If ongoing official contact with pupils is required once they have left the setting, members of staff will be expected to use existing alumni networks and use official school email.

5.2. Staff will not use personal social media accounts to contact pupils or parents, nor should any contact be accepted. All communication with parents via social media should be through the school/trust's social media accounts.

5.3. Any communication from pupils and parents received on personal social media accounts must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy).

6. Pupils Personal Use of Social Media

Safe and appropriate use of social media will be taught to pupils as part of an embedded and progressive education approach to E-safety, via age appropriate sites and resources.

6.1. We are aware that many popular social media sites state that they are not for children under the age of 13, therefore we will not create accounts specifically for pupils under this age.

6.2. Any concerns regarding pupils' use of social media will be dealt with in accordance with existing policies, including anti-bullying and behaviour.

6.3. Concerns will be shared with parents/carers as appropriate, particularly when concerning underage use of social media sites, games or tools.

6.4. Pupils should be advised:

- a) To consider the benefits and risks of sharing personal details on social media sites which could identify them and/or their location.
- b) To only approve and invite known friends on social media sites and to deny access to others by making profiles private.
- c) Not to meet any online friends without a parent/carer or other responsible adult's permission and only when a trusted adult is present.
- d) To use social media sites which are appropriate for their age and abilities.
- e) How to block and report unwanted communications.
- f) How to report concerns both within the setting and externally.

7. Official Use of Social Media

Schools within the Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust must make use of official social media channels, including Facebook and Twitter, with clear educational or community engagement objectives. The privacy of the individual will always be paramount.

- 7.1. Official social media use will be conducted in line with existing policies, including: Anti-bullying, Data Protection, Confidentiality and Safeguarding Policies.
- 7.2. Parents and carers will be informed of any official social media use with pupils; parental and pupil consent will be obtained, as required.

7.3. Staff expectations

Members of staff who follow and/or like school or Trust official social media channels are advised to use *dedicated professional accounts*, where possible, to avoid blurring professional boundaries. If members of staff are participating in online social media activity as part of their capacity as an employee of the setting, they will:

- a) Always be professional and aware they are an ambassador for the setting.
- b) Disclose their official role or position but make it clear that they do not necessarily speak on behalf of the setting.
- c) Always be responsible, credible, fair and honest, and consider how the information being published could be perceived or shared.
- d) Always act within the legal frameworks they would adhere to within the workplace, including: libel, defamation, confidentiality, copyright, data protection and equalities laws.
- e) Ensure that they have appropriate consent before sharing images on the official social media channel.
- f) Not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of the setting, unless they are authorised to do so.
- g) Inform their line manager, the DSL (or deputy) or the Principal of any concerns, such as criticism, inappropriate content or contact from pupils.