

John Fletcher of Madeley
———— *Primary School* ————

Staff Social Media Policy

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What is social media?

'Social media is the term commonly given to internet and mobile-based channels and tools that allow users to interact with each other and share opinions and content. As the name implies, social media involves the building of communities or networks and encouraging participation and engagement'.

[Chartered Institute of Public Relations Social Media Panel]

For the purposes of this policy social media includes the use of both **external** facing channels such as 'Twitter, Facebook etc and **internal** channels such as discussion forums, Sharepoint, blogs etc. The same standards apply to both external and internal channels.

Why do we need a Social Media Policy?

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that employees are provided with clear guidance on what is **acceptable** and what is **not acceptable** when using social media.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Code of Conduct.

The same rules that apply to your actions in general, as found in the Code of Conduct, apply to your conduct online. Staff are reminded that, when referring to the school on Social Media, they must not post any content that is contrary to the school's Christian ethos or values.

We respect the rights of employees and, by and large, what you do in your own time is your concern. However, actions in or outside of work that affect your work performance, the work of others, or the school's interests are a suitable focus for school policy.

The lines between public and private, personal and professional use are hazy in online social networks. This policy covers the responsibilities of employees both inside and outside of work.

Using social media for personal use:

When employees use social media for personal use, either at work¹ or in a personal capacity, the personal image you project in social media may adversely reflect on the image of the school.

When using social media for personal purposes, you must not imply you are speaking for the school. Avoid use of your council e-mail address, logos or other employment identification. Make it clear that what you say is representative of your personal views only. You need to be aware of your association with the school and that some readers may interpret your postings to be school opinion. This includes posting on any opinions you may have in respect to other council officers and/or stakeholders.

If you choose to identify yourself as a council employee within a social network, show yourself in the best possible light and remember that you are now connected to your colleagues, managers and members of the public who may also be stakeholders of the

¹ Personal use at work is only permitted in non work hours, e.g. before the time you start work, in your lunch break or after the time you finish work.

school. You should therefore ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work at the school.

Think twice. You should use mature discretion in all personal communications in social media.

Know your obligations. You must comply with other school policies when using social media. For example, you should be careful not to breach school confidentiality.

Show respect to all. You should be respectful of the Local Authority and your fellow employees.

Do not post any content which may result in actions for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or other claims for damages. If employees are found to be posting such information you may face action in accordance with the school's disciplinary process.

Be aware that your profile information is now in the public domain and if completed with your employment details, e.g. work for Telford and Wrekin Council... could attract unwanted contacts or requests for views that are not appropriate.

The school will not be able to accept liability for any actions arising out of employee's personal use of social networking sites and may take additional action against the employee.

Always remember that posting to social media sites could mean your comments being permanently available and open to being re-published in the media.

The school may monitor use of social media sites to ensure acceptable use.

- Any communication received from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the designated person for Child Protection (Headteacher).
- If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media, these must immediately be reported as above.
- Members of the school staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts.
- All email communication between staff and members of the school community on school business must be made from an official school email account.
- Staff should not use personal email accounts or mobile phones to make contact with members of the school community on school business, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances given prior approval by the Headteacher.
- Staff are advised to avoid posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the school and members of its community on any social media accounts.
- Staff are also advised to consider the reputation of the school in any posts or comments related to the school on any social media accounts
- Staff should not accept any current pupil as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account.
- Staff are strongly advised not to add any past pupils under the age of 16 to their personal Social Media accounts unless formally declared to the School Safeguarding Team.

- Staff are strongly advised not to add parents as friends to their personal Social Media accounts.

School-sanctioned use of social media

There are also many possibilities for using social media to enhance and develop students' learning. Staff may use the school website as a medium through which to regularly communicate with parents and the wider public. All posts on the school website must follow guidance and ensure that the school's ethos and aims are reflected in posts. Staff must not publish photographs of children without the written consent of parents, identify by name any children featured in photographs, or allow personally identifying information to be published.

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 ideally should be linked to an official school email account. This must only be done with prior permission from the Headteacher.
- The URL and identity of the site should be notified to a member of the SLT before access is permitted for students.
- The content of any school-sanctioned social media site should be solely professional and should reflect well on the school.
- Staff must not publish photographs of children without the written consent of parents / carers, 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.
- Any inappropriate comments on or abuse of school-sanctioned social media should immediately be "screenshot" or printed then removed and reported to a member of SLT.
- Staff should not engage with any direct messaging of students through social media where the message is not public.