Staff Social Media Compliance Policy

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Please note that all Trust policies are reviewed annually. Should you have any queries regards this policy, note an omission or wish to propose an amendment, please email sconnor@strathmore.richmond.sch.uk.

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1. Introduction

For the purposes of this policy, Social Media is any type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. This includes online social forums such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Social media also covers blogs and video and image sharing websites such as YouTube and Flickr.

Virtual Learning Environments, such as Google Classrooms and the O365 Microsoft Education Platform, are not considered by the Trust to be social media platforms and under no circumstances should be used as such.

Whilst recognising the benefits of social media and the opportunities for communication this provides, this Policy sets out the principles which staff and contractors are expected to follow when using social media to ensure the School upholds the highest possible standards of confidentiality and accountability and to ensure that its reputation and that of its pupils is safeguarded at all times.

All staff working within the School are in a position of trust, they are therefore required to familiarise themselves with this Policy and raise any concerns where they may arise to safeguard our children and protect our staff.

Caution is advised when inviting work colleagues to be 'friends' in personal social networking sites; Social networking sites blur the line between work and personal lives and it may be difficult to maintain professional relationships or it might be embarrassing if too much personal information is known in the work place.

Staff should be aware that there are many more examples of social media than can be listed here and this is a constantly changing area.

Staff should follow these guidelines in relation to any social media that they use both in work and in their private lives, insofar as any private activity may impinge on their professional life.

The recognised Trade unions have been consulted.

2. Scope

This policy applies to employees who are directly employed by schools within the Trust and extends to Governing Bodies, Trustees and contractors.

The aim is to advise staff and others of the expectation of working in a school environment when using social media, and highlighting:

1. The importance of ensuring that relevant privacy settings are activated and regularly reviewed.
2. The restrictions of maintaining a professional relationship and professional conduct are followed.
3. Guidance on what is acceptable and what is unacceptable when using social media.

To identify responsibilities of the Trust and its staff in line with the relevant policies including:
- ICT Usage
- Bullying & Harassment
- Code of Conduct

3.	Policy

Using Social Media on behalf of the School

Members of staff must at all times act in the best interests of children and young people when creating, participating in or contributing content to social media sites.

Only official school social media resources must be used for communicating with pupils or to enable pupils to communicate with one another. There must be a strong pedagogical or business reason for creating official school sites to communicate with pupils or others, and written consent from the Headteacher must be obtained. Staff are not permitted to create sites for trivial reasons which could expose the school to unwelcome publicity or cause reputational damage. Sites created must not breach the terms and conditions of social media service providers, particularly with regard to minimum age requirements.

Staff are only allowed to access social media websites from the School's computers or devices when those websites are relevant to their professional duties. If staff are unsure they should seek confirmation from their line manager.

Any recording devices e.g. cameras, video cameras, mobile phones etc. must only be used for specified purposes as directed by the School.

The School understands that staff may wish to use their own computers or devices, such as laptops and smartphones, to access social media websites whilst they are at work. Staff must limit their use of social media on their own equipment to their official rest breaks such as their lunch breaks.

Staff using social media in a personal capacity outside of the school environment must recognise that whilst they are not acting on behalf of the School, the School may be adversely affected if the School is identified as the staff members' place of work and negative or inappropriate comments are made. Staff are permitted to say that they work for the school, which recognises that it is natural for its staff to sometimes to want to discuss their work on social media. However, the staff member's online profile (for example, the name of a blog or a Twitter name) must not contain the School's name.

Staff must also be mindful of the information they put on social media and consider how this will reflect on the School, its staff, pupils and their families:

It should not bring the organisation into disrepute, for example by:

- Maintaining any relationship with pupils on social media e.g. staff should decline 'Friend' requests, unless the pupil(s) are immediate family members. If requests are received from pupils who are not family members, this must be raised with the Headteacher or another member of the School Leadership Team. Measures will then be taken to communicate to students that such connections should be with the School's official site where appropriate;

- Having any contact with pupils' family members through social media on behalf of the school, if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity.

- Criticising or arguing with parents, colleagues etc;

- Making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups; Posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content;

- Giving personal contact details to children or young people, including their mobile telephone number or personal email address;

- Using personal equipment (e.g. mobile phone device) to communicate with children or young people, except in exceptional circumstances such as an emergency;

- Not having the relevant written permission from parents for communication, using the School's equipment. Permission must detail the specific reasons why this communication is required;

- Making contact for personal reasons;

- Using the internet or other communication channels to send personal messages to children/young persons;

- Responding to/ request personal information from a child or young person, other than that which might be appropriate as part of your professional role;

- Mentioning in a negative manner, the school, its pupils, parents or colleagues; commenting on any incidents that occur or have occurred within the School; posting photographs, videos or any other types of image of pupils or their families.

Breach confidentiality, for example by:

- Discussing confidential or personal information about an individual (such as a colleague or pupil) or organisation (such as a supplier of services);

- Discussing the School's internal workings (such as ongoing Personnel issues, or its future business plans that have not been communicated to the wider public);

- Using information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain nor should it be passed on to others who may use it in such a way;

- Using school email addresses or any other official contact details for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.

Do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by:

- Making offensive or derogatory comments relating to age, disability, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation;

- Using social media to bully another individual (such as a staff member of the school); or Posting images that are or are likely to be considered discriminatory or offensive;

- Using social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, colleagues, other professionals, other organisations.

- Breaching copyright, for example by:

- Using someone else's images or written content without permission;

- Failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something.

Other

- No contact should be made via social media with pupils unless they are immediate family members.

4. Raising Concerns

Any concerns should be raised with your Line Manager or the Headteacher.

5. Disciplinary Action

All staff within the school are required to adhere to this policy.

Staff should note that any breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action. Serious breaches of this policy, for example incidents of bullying of colleagues or social media activity causing serious damage to the reputation of the school, may constitute gross misconduct and lead to summary dismissal.

Where a contractor becomes aware that one of their employees has breached this policy they will need to notify the School, and ensure that appropriate action is taken

6. Monitoring

All school ICT systems may be monitored in accordance with the School's ICT Usage Policy, so personal privacy cannot be assumed when using school hardware.

Schools can monitor the usage of its own internet and email services without prior notification or authorisation from users (staff, contractors and pupils) where justifiable concerns have been raised regarding electronic communication.

All staff are required to complete, sign and return to the School, the "Statement of Acceptance of the Terms and Conditions of the Social Media Policy" (Appendix 1)

Statement of Acceptance of the Terms and Conditions of the Social Media Policy

I agree to follow the rules set out in the Social Media Policy.

I will use all relevant social media and the school's network and ICT facilities in a responsible way so as to preserve and protect the interest of the school at all times and will observe all the restrictions explained in the Policy. If I am in any doubt I will consult _____ *(name of Headteacher)*.

I agree to report any misuse or a breach of this policy to _____ *(name of Headteacher)*. I understand that any breaches of the Policy may result in disciplinary action being taken against me.

Name of Employee:

Signature of Employee:

Date: