

# The Auriga Academy Trust

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

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## 1. Introduction

The Trust recognises the benefits of social media, but it also brings potential risk, to the Trust and its constituent schools and to individuals. For the purposes of this policy, 'social media' is defined as websites and applications (apps) that allow people to create or share content and/or participate in social networking. Examples include, amongst others Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, Reddit, Pinterest, YouTube, WordPress, Tumblr, Ask.fm, WhatsApp, Messenger. This policy also refers to online gaming platforms and MMORPG ('massively multiplayer online role-playing games') e.g. World of Warcraft.

The Trust realises that a growing number of educationalists and education groups use discussion groups, online chat forums and bulletin boards to share good practice and disseminate information and resources. The use of online discussion groups and bulletin boards relating to professional practice and continuing professional development is encouraged, although staff are reminded that they are representing the Trust / school, and appropriate professional standards should apply to all postings and messages.

## 2. Scope and Responsibilities

This policy applies to all use of social media, by all staff, trustees, governors and volunteers, including personal use, work-related use, during working hours or out of hours, onsite or offsite, through the school's internet network or otherwise, on school owned or personal devices, on official school social media accounts/platforms or personal accounts/platforms. This should be read in conjunction with the Trust's **Bring Your Own Device Policy** and the **IT Security & Acceptable Usage Policy**.

All staff are expected to comply with this policy. All senior leaders are responsible for ensuring their team read, understand, and comply with this procedure.

In order to be described as an official 'Trust / school platform' or 'Trust / school account':

- Master privileges and access permissions are held by the school
- The Trust / school must have editorial oversight of all content
- The number of staff members with administrative rights should be limited to those necessary.

'Quasi school' social media, for example a Twitter account such as 'Miss Stuart History @ Special School' are not official school platforms unless the above conditions are met. The Trust / school will not accept liability for content and postings on accounts containing the Trust / school name which have not been authorised and do not meet the official 'Trust / school platform' criteria. Accounts used must be listed in the Privacy Notice, and personal information and pictures should not be posted without appropriate consent and oversight. Authorised accounts will remain the property of the Trust / school and may be deleted at any time by the Trust / school.

The Trust's Data Protection Officer, [The Education Data Hub](#) will provide assistance and further guidance on the use of social media with regards to data protection.

A breach of this policy could lead to disciplinary action.

If there are concerns that comments or posts may potentially be defamatory or libellous, the Trust / school may seek legal advice.

### 3. Recognised Trust / school channels

Official social media channels recognised by the Trust are:

Platform	Account/Page name	Master administration role	Approved users (posting)	Date
				Opened / Closed
Twitter	@HouseCapella	Maria Landeira (Primary Head of Centre)	Maria Landeira	Opened: 1/9/21
You Tube	Strathmore School Home Learning <a href="https://www.youtube.com/@strathmoreschool589">https://www.youtube.com/@strathmoreschool589</a>	Sarah Hurtado (Headteacher)	Sarah Hurtado / Lauren Crew / Adriana Martyr / Laura Wrigglesworth / Luis Ferreira	Opened: April 20
Facebook	FOSS – Friends of Strathmore School <a href="https://www.facebook.com/FOSSFriendsofStrathmoreSchool">https://www.facebook.com/FOSSFriendsofStrathmoreSchool</a>	Jane Curzon (FOSS Chair)	Jane Curzon	Opened: 6/3/17
Twitter	@friendsof_strat	Jane Curzon (FOSS Chair)	Jane Curzon	Opened: Feb 17
Facebook	Strathmore Parents Account <a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/3651385304889119">https://www.facebook.com/groups/3651385304889119</a>	Tony Horgan		Opened: 30/3/20
Facebook	Clarendon Cycle Scheme	Laurence Balcombe	Laurence Balcombe	Opened: 13/9/12
Twitter	bespokebeheard	Laurence Balcombe	Laurence Balcombe	Opened: June 24
Instagram	bespokebeheard	Laurence Balcombe	Laurence Balcombe	Opened: 7/10/15

In setting up a social media presence the following guidelines must be adhered to:

- The official use of social media sites is limited to activities with educational or community engagement objectives.
- The official use of social media as a communication tool has been formally risk assessed and approved by the CEO / Headteacher.
- Account information and login details must be held centrally in the school.
- Official social media sites have appropriate privacy settings, are suitably protected and, where possible, linked to from our website.
- Official social media use will be conducted in line with existing policies, including anti-bullying, image/camera use, data protection, confidentiality, and child protection.
- Any official social media activity involving pupils will be moderated.
- Written permission of parents and carers will be sought for posts involving names/images of children.
- Official social media use will be used in conjunction with other methods of communication, so as to reach all members of the community, including those who do not / cannot utilise social media.

#### **4. Trust wide Social Media Standards**

The Trust / school will ensure online conduct, whether on behalf of the school, or posted on a personal account by a staff member, does not impact adversely on the reputation and integrity of the setting.

As part of our obligations under KCSIE the Trust / school may check (and record the outcomes of these checks) the online presence including social media searches of our staff, trustees, governors and volunteers.

Any use of social media that could impact on the Trust / school should meet these standards:

- Respect others, they may be affected directly or indirectly by your actions online
- Be honest about who you are, and what you know
- Be sensitive to others and to your position within the Trust / school
- Protect privacy and respect your confidentiality of that of others
- Maintain professional standards
- If in doubt, don't post!

#### **5. Trust wide Social Media Rules**

The following rules should be followed, to ensure all staff meet the required standards:

##### **5.1 Be kind**

- Use common courtesy
- Consider the potential effect on others of your words or content you post
- Always be responsible, credible, fair, and honest, and consider how the information being published could be perceived or shared.

##### **5.2 Be honest**

- Be transparent about your role, especially when representing the school in an official capacity
- Only post about things you know to be true and only if it is appropriate to share them
- Do not post someone else's images or content without prior permission, or with appropriate acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce

##### **5.3 Be sensitive**

- Do not enter into discussions with parents or colleagues via social media forums
- Do not post or share images, memes (or similar) or links that are inappropriate or have inappropriate content
- Do not post anything that could be considered; discriminatory, gossip, lies, offensive or threatening comments, comments/images that deliberately, negligently, or recklessly mock, tease, humiliate or harass an individual
- Be especially careful when posting about potentially inflammatory subjects
- Do not give advice or information that you know to be contrary to the Trust / school's policies or interests
- Do not reveal any sensitive information about the Trust / school or about any plans that are not yet public
- In the event of an incident affecting the Trust / school or any members of the Trust / school community only official communications channels and accounts should comment or share news or updates
- Be aware of the potential risks of communicating with current and ex-pupils in ways which may be considered as inappropriate, particularly if it could be shown that the adult-pupil relationship of trust had been breached
- Only use official school platforms to post school information, celebration, news, and photographs. Ensure all posts are in line with the Safeguarding Policy
- Report any inappropriate contact from pupils to the Trust / school's designated safeguarding lead at the earliest opportunity to prevent situations from escalating
- Staff are reminded that, as a safeguarding issue, they should always be careful about who they are 'talking to'. It is very easy to hide an identity in an on-line conversation.

#### **5.4 Protect privacy and respect confidentiality**

- Do not breach confidentiality – do not share anything private about anyone else
- Don't share anything about yourself that you wouldn't want the rest of the Trust / school community to see
- Be aware that what you post could divulge information such as your home address
- Always follow the Data Protection Policy and ensure that you have secured the appropriate consent before sharing images on the official social media channel
- Apply appropriate security and privacy settings to your social media accounts and the devices you use to access them
- Make yourself familiar with privacy settings – these change often and with little or no warning; users with access to the Trust / school account will ensure that privacy settings are routinely updated
- Be aware of 'phishing' attempts through social media, where scammers may try to obtain information about you or other people, including passwords or financial information.

#### **5.5 Maintain professional standards**

- Do not 'befriend' or initiate engagement online with pupils, or families of pupils, (including former pupils who have recently left the school) unless you are the parent of the pupil or a close family member
- If you do wish to communicate with or are contacted by a former pupil who has recently left the school, via social media, contact the Headteacher before engaging
- Always be professional and aware that you are an ambassador for the Trust / school. Remember you are representing the Trust / school and the same standards of conduct should be followed online as well as offline
- Do not post or share offensive, discriminatory, or illegal content, or anything that would bring the school into disrepute
- Ensure a clear distinction between Trust / school, and personal life when making comments and posts.

#### **5.6 If in doubt, don't post!**

- Once you've posted something to the internet it cannot be taken back
- Even if you delete content it may already have been copied or saved by another user and could be shared more widely
- Even if you have posted in a closed or private group other members may not respect the rules or your confidentiality.

### **6. Access to Social Media at Work, for Personal Use**

Personal use of the Internet including access to social media is only permitted in your own time (e.g. before or after work and during your lunchtime) and must not be left running "in the background", whilst at work. Staff are advised to refer the Trust's **Bring Your Own Device Policy** and **IT Security & Acceptable Usage Policy** for further guidance.

### **7. Online Safety Concerns**

All staff members will be made aware of the reporting procedure for online safety concerns, including breaches of filtering, youth produced sexual imagery ('sexting', 'nudes'), cyberbullying, illegal content, and radicalisation. Refer to '[Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022](#)' – in particular, but not exclusively para 133, 135-148 Online Safety.

### **8. Inappropriate References to the Trust, a School or Staff**

Members of staff who find that 'friends' have posted inappropriate material, relating to themselves on a social media site should ask them to remove it. If necessary, users can also report comments and posts to the site. Staff should advise the CEO / Headteacher if there are likely repercussions for the setting.

Where staff are the target of complaints or abuse on social networking sites, site reporting functions should be used. Where possible screen captures ('screen grabs') or photos of any post, page, or thread which may be considered harmful, threatening or abusive should be taken.

Where staff find inappropriate references to the Trust, a school, staff or pupils posted by parents, colleagues, pupils, or other members of the community, this should be reported to the CEO / Headteacher as soon as possible. The CEO / Headteacher will take the appropriate course of action, which may include seeking legal advice or contacting the police. In the case of an individual then the matter may be dealt with under the disciplinary process. Staff must not attempt to deal with the situation personally.

## **9. Complaints**

There may be times where individuals will bypass the Trust / school's complaints procedures and use social media to criticise school decisions or policy, and, in some cases, make malicious comments about staff, trustees or governors.

Whilst people have a right to freedom of expression under the Human Rights Act 1998, their opinions should not cause harm or distress. Any complaint, dispute or grievance posted on any social media channels which names staff members, pupils, trustees, governors, or volunteers should be reported to the CEO / Headteacher as soon as possible.

Concerns and complaints relating to colleague or pupil social media activity should be directed to the CEO / Headteacher as appropriate.

## **10. Relevant Legislation**

In applying this policy, the Trust will adhere to its rights, responsibilities, and duties in accordance with UK law. The following legislation may be pertinent:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 \(statutory guidance from the Department for Education issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 etc\)](#).
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- Malicious Communications Act 1988: Section 1
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Computer Misuse Act 1990
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Communications Act 2003: Section 127
- Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006.
- The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulations
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Defamation Act 2013.

**Appendix 1: Acceptance of the Terms and Conditions of the Social Media Policy**

**Please note that confirmation as Read can be made on EveryHR.**

I agree to follow the rules set out in the **AAT 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 Trust ./ school at all times and will observe all the restrictions explained in the Policy. If I am in any doubt I will consult \_\_\_\_\_ (*School: name of Headteacher Trust: name of CEO*).

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:

## The AURIGA Academy Trust Document Control System

NAME OF DOCUMENT	AAT Staff Social Media Compliance Policy
STATUS	<b>APPROVED</b>
DATE APPROVED	08.05.2024
APPROVER	CEO
OWNER	Finance Director
GOVERNANCE REVIEWER	
ANTICIPATED REVIEW DATE	08.05.2028
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