Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust

Use of Social Media Policy

Level 1 (DBAT-wide policy for adoption by all academies**)**

Date adopted: February 2017

Contents

History of most recent Policy changes (must be completed)

Date	Page	Change	Origin of Change e.g. TU request, Change in legislation

1.1   Introduction

Social media is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other, e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn. In addition, some games, for example 'Minecraft' or 'World of Warcraft', and video sharing platforms such as 'You Tube' have social media elements to them.

DBAT recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. Staff, parents/carers and pupils/students are actively encouraged to find creative ways to use social media. However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This policy aims to encourage the safe use of social media by The Trust, its staff, parents, carers and children.

1.2 Scope

This policy is subject to DBAT's Codes of Conduct and E-safety policies.

This policy:

- **applies to all academy and central staff, and main & local board members, and to all online communications which directly or indirectly, represent DBAT (The Trust).**
- **applies to such online communications posted at any time and from anywhere.**
- **Encourages the safe and responsible use of social media through training and education**
- ***Defines the monitoring of public social media activity pertaining to The Trust***

The Trust respects privacy and understands that staff and pupils/students may use social media forums in their private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or The Trust's reputation are within the scope of this policy.

Professional communications are those made through official channels, (including from work emails), posted on an academy account or using the Trust's or an academy's name. All professional communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications are those made via personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with The Trust or impacts on The Trust, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not

communicating on behalf of The Trust with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon The Trust are outside the scope of this policy.

Digital communications with pupils/students are also considered.

Staff may use social media to communicate with learners via an academy social media account for teaching and learning purposes but must consider whether this is appropriate and consider the potential implications.

1.3 Organisational control

1.3.1 Roles & Responsibilities

- **SLT**
  - Facilitate training and guidance on Social Media use
  - Develop and implement the Social Media policy

- **Administrator / Moderator**
  - Create accounts following SLT approval
  - Store account details, including passwords securely
  - Be involved in monitoring and contributing to accounts

- **Staff**
  - Know the contents of and ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies
  - Attend appropriate training
  - Regularly monitor, update and manage content he/she has posted via a Trust account

1.3.2 Process for creating new accounts

The Trust community is encouraged to consider if a social media account will help them in their work. Anyone in the Central Team wishing to create a social media account must present a business case to The Trust Leadership Team which covers the following points:-

- The aim of the account
- The intended audience
- How the account will be promoted
- Who will run the account (at least two staff members should be named)
- Will the account be open or private/closed

In all cases, the SLT must be satisfied that anyone running a social media account on behalf of The Trust has read and understood this policy and received appropriate training. This also applies to anyone who is not directly employed by The Trust, including volunteers or parents.

1.3.3 Monitoring

Trust accounts must be monitored regularly and frequently (on all working days including during holidays). Any comments, queries or complaints made through those accounts must be responded to within 24 hours (or on the next working day if received at a weekend) even if the response is only to acknowledge receipt.
The Trust requires that all users of social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies.

- Digital communications by staff must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy. Staff will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff. Trust and academy social media accounts must not be used for personal gain. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of The Trust.

- Users must declare who they are in social media posts or accounts. Anonymous posts are discouraged in relation to academy activity.

- If a journalist makes contact about posts made using social media staff must follow The Trust media policy before responding.

- Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by The Trust and will be reported as soon as possible to a relevant senior member of staff, and escalated where appropriate.

- The use of social media by staff while at work may be monitored, in line with academy policies. The Trust permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites. However, where excessive use is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken.

- The Trust will take appropriate action in the event of breaches of the social media policy. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, The Trust will deal with the matter internally. Where conduct is considered illegal, The Trust will report the matter to the police and other relevant external agencies, and may take action according to the disciplinary policy.

1.3.4 <u>Legal considerations</u>

- Users of social media should consider the copyright of the content they are sharing and, where necessary, should seek permission from the copyright holder before sharing.

- Users must ensure that their use of social media does not infringe upon relevant data protection laws, or breach confidentiality.

1.3.5 <u>Handling abuse</u>

- When acting on behalf of The Trust, handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity.

- If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, central Trust and academy users should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and should inform the audience exactly why the action was taken

- If you feel that you or someone else is subject to abuse by colleagues through use of a social networking site, then this action must be reported using the agreed academy protocols.

1.3.6 <u>Tone</u>
The tone of content published on social media should be appropriate to the audience, whilst retaining appropriate levels of professional standards.

1.3.7 <u>Use of images</u>
Academy use of images can be assumed to be acceptable, providing the following guidelines are strictly adhered to.

- **Permission to use any photos or video recordings should be sought before publication.** If anyone, for any reason, does not give permission for images of themselves or their children to be published then their wishes must be respected.

- **Under no circumstances should staff share or upload student pictures online other than via academy owned social media accounts**

- Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on Trust social media accounts. Students should be appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any academy list of children whose images must not be published.

- If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately.

1.3.8 <u>Personal use</u>

- **Staff**
  - o Personal communications are those made via personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with The Trust or impacts on The Trust, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of The Trust with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.

  - o Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon The Trust are outside the scope of this policy.

  - o Where excessive personal use of social media in academy is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken

- **Pupil/Students**
  - o **Staff are not permitted to follow or engage with current or prior pupils/students of The Trust on any personal social media network account.**

  - o The Trust's education programme should enable the pupils/students to be safe and responsible users of social media.

  - o Pupils/students are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about The Trust. Any offensive or inappropriate comments will be resolved by the use of The Trust's behaviour policy

- **Parents/Carers**
  - o If parents/carers have access to a Trust/ academy learning platform where posting or commenting is enabled, parents/carers will be informed about acceptable use.

  - o Parents/Carers are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about The Trust. In the event of any offensive or inappropriate comments being made, The Trust will ask the parent/carer to remove the post and invite them to discuss the issues in person. If necessary, refer parents to The Trust's complaints procedures.

1.3.9 <u>Monitoring posts about The Trust</u>

- As part of active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to pro-actively monitor the Internet for public postings about The Trust.

- The Trust should effectively respond to social media comments and may seek legal advice if necessary.

1.4 Appendix

1.4.1 Managing your personal use of Social Media:

- "Nothing" on social media is truly private
- Social media can blur the lines between your professional and private life. Don't use The Trust logo and/or branding on personal accounts
- Check your settings regularly and test your privacy
- Keep an eye on your digital footprint
- Keep your personal information private
- Regularly review your connections – keep them to those you want to be connected to
- When posting online consider; Scale, Audience and Permanency of what you post
- If you want to criticise, do it politely.
- Take control of your images – do you want to be tagged in an image? What would children or parents say about you if they could see your images?
- Know how to report a problem

1.4.2 Managing academy social media accounts

The Do's
- Check with a senior leader before publishing content that may have controversial implications for The Trust
- Use a disclaimer when expressing personal views
- Make it clear who is posting content
- Use an appropriate and professional tone
- Be respectful to all parties
- Ensure you have permission to 'share' other peoples' materials and acknowledge the author
- Express opinions but do so in a balanced and measured manner
- Think before responding to comments and, when in doubt, get a second opinion
- Seek advice and report any mistakes using The Trust's reporting process
- Consider turning off tagging people in images where possible

The Don'ts
- Don't make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring The Trust into disrepute
- Don't publish confidential or commercially sensitive material
- Don't breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation
- Consider the appropriateness of content for any audience of academy accounts, and don't link to, embed or add potentially inappropriate content
- Don't post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content
- Don't use social media to air internal grievances