



L.E.A.D. Academy Trust

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## Social Media Policy

<b>REVIEW PROCESS</b>	
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## **Our vision**

Through outstanding leadership we, at the L.E.A.D. Academy Trust, will provide the highest quality education to enable every pupil to realise their full potential.

## **Our principles**

*To achieve our vision we prioritise the four core principles for which our name stands:*

**Lead** ~ *to show the way; to be first or foremost*

In every aspect of life the ability to lead is essential. Strong leadership is the key to the success of our schools. We will develop leadership skills in everyone who attends one of them, ensuring the development of pupils as leaders of their own learning.

**Empower** ~ *to give power to; to enable*

At L.E.A.D. Academy schools pupils are empowered to have high aspirations for their futures. We nurture and challenge pupils to take responsibility, make decisions and work together so they grow into confident and resilient young people.

**Achieve** ~ *to accomplish; to get or attain by effort*

We believe in achievement in its broadest sense and that enjoyment of learning is crucial to success. We continually look for and reward achievement in every individual in our schools. We also know that a strong command of English and maths is vital as a foundation for the whole curriculum and prioritise learning in these core subjects.

**Drive** ~ *to cause and guide progress; to impel forward*

We will provide the very best education and training for every individual in our schools and will ensure that this is delivered. We value excellent teaching, underpinned by high quality professional development and will constantly move forwards, using and instigating the best ideas and practice.

We also understand that children need to be motivated if they are to succeed in life and we will provide a stimulating curriculum and environment which will prepare them for their futures with confidence and determination.

## **Introduction to the Policy**

The policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust's safeguarding and child protection policy.

The Trust is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using



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social networking sites.

The widespread availability and use of social networking application bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our reputation.

This policy and associated guidance is to protect staff and advise school leadership on how to deal with potential inappropriate use of social networking sites.

For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- That the school is not exposed to legal risks;
- That the reputation of the school is not adversely affected; and
- That our users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the school.

Facebook is targeted at older teenagers and adults. They have a no under 13 registration policy and recommend parental guidance for 13 to 16 year olds.

The following are extracts from Facebook privacy policy:

“If you are under age 13, please do not attempt to register for Facebook or provide any personal information about yourself to us. If we learn that we have collected personal information from a child under age 13, we will delete that information as quickly as possible. If you believe that we might have any information from a child under age 13, please contact us”

“We strongly recommend that minors 13 years of age or older ask their parents for permission before sending any information about themselves to anyone over the Internet and we encourage parents to teach their children about safe internet use practices.”

MSN (Microsoft Network) recommend 13 but do not appear to have a policy of debarring younger pupils. There are many primary age pupils active on MSN.

This guidance is to advise and protect staff from accusations of improper relationships with pupils:

#### **SCOPE**

This policy covers the use of social networking applications by all school stakeholders, including, the Trust Board employees, governors and pupils. These groups are referred to collectively as ‘Trust representatives’ for brevity.

The requirements of this policy apply to all uses of social networking applications which are used for any school related purpose and regardless of whether the Trust representatives are contributing in an official capacity to social networking applications provided by external organisations.



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Social networking applications include, but are not limited to: Blogs, for example:

- Blogger;
- Twitter;
- Online discussion forums, such as netmums;
- Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook; and
- Media sharing services, for example YouTube

All Trust representatives should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the Trust's Equality and Diversity Policy.

### **Use of Social networking sites in worktime**

Use of social networking applications in work time for personal use only is not permitted, unless permission has been given by the Director of schools.

### **Social Networking as part of School Service**

All proposals for using social networking applications as part of a school service or Trust service (whether they are hosted by the school or by a third party) must be approved by the Head teacher or Director of schools first

Use of social networking applications which are not related to any school/Trust services (for example, contributing to a wiki provided by a professional association) does not need to be approved by the Head teacher/Director of schools. However, Trust representatives must still operate in line with the requirements set out within the policy.

Trust representatives must adhere to the following Terms of Use. The Terms of Use below apply to all uses of social networking applications by all Trust representatives. This includes, but is not limited to, public facing applications such as open discussion forums and internally-facing uses such as project blogs regardless of whether they are hosted on school network or not.

Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression attaches only to lawful conduct. L.E.A.D. Academy Trust expects that users of social networking applications will always exercise the right of freedom of expression with due consideration for the rights of others and strictly in accordance with these Terms of Use.

### **Social Networking applications and their use**

- Must not be used to publish any content which may result in actions for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or other claim for damages. This includes but is not limited to material of an illegal, sexual or offensive nature that may bring the Trust/school into disrepute;
- Must not be used for the promotion of personal financial interests, commercial ventures or personal campaigns;
- Must not be used in an abusive or hateful manner;
- Must not be used for actions that would put Trust representatives in breach of staff codes



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- of conduct or policies relating to staff;
- Must not breach the Trust's misconduct, equal opportunities or bullying and harassment policies;
- Must not be used to discuss or advise any matters relating to school matters, staff, pupils or parents;
- No staff member should have a pupil or former pupil under the age of 18 as a 'friend' with whom they share information;
- Employees should not identify themselves as a representative of the school/Trust;
- References should not be made to any staff member, pupil, parent or school activity / event unless prior permission has been obtained and agreed with the Head teacher/Director of schools; and
- Staff should be aware that if their out-of-work activity causes potential embarrassment for the employer or detrimentally affects the employer's reputation then the employer is entitled to take disciplinary action.

Violation of this policy will be considered as gross misconduct and can result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee up to and including termination of employment.

### **Guidance/protection for staff using social networking sites**

- No member of staff should interact with any pupil in any school on social networking sites;
- No member of staff should interact with any ex-pupil in the school on social networking sites who is under the age of 18;
- This means that no member of the school staff should request access to a pupil's area on the social networking site. Neither should they permit the pupil access to the staff member's area e.g. by accepting them as a friend;
- Where family and friends have pupils in school and there are legitimate family links, please inform the Head teacher of the school in writing;
- It is illegal for an adult to network, giving their age and status as a child; and
- If you have any evidence of pupils or adults using social networking sites in the working day, please contact the named DSL in school or the Trust DSL if it relates to a Trust employee.

### **Child protection guidance**

If the Head teacher receives a disclosure that an adult employed by the school is using a social networking site in an inappropriate manner as detailed above they should:

- Record the disclosure in line with their child protection policy;
- Schools must refer the matter to the LADO who will investigate;
- Contact the Trust DSLs using [safeguarding@leadacademytrust.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@leadacademytrust.co.uk);
- Contact HR;
- If the disclosure has come from a parent, take normal steps to calm the parent and explain processes;
- If disclosure comes from a member of staff, try to maintain confidentiality;
- The LADO will advise whether the member of staff should be suspended pending



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investigation after contact with the police. It is not recommended that action is taken until advice has been given; and

- If disclosure is from a child, follow your normal process in your child protection policy until the police investigation has been carried out.