



STAFF USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY 2020

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1.0 RATIONALE

The widespread availability and use of social media applications bring opportunities to understand, engage, and communicate in new and exciting 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 duties to our school, the community, our legal responsibilities and our reputation.

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. They apply to all members of staff of Horizon Multi Academy Trust.

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Protect the school from legal risks
- Ensure that the reputation of the school, its staff and governors is protected
- Safeguard all children
- Safeguard all staff
- Ensure that any users are able clearly to distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the school

2.0 DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to: Blogs, Online discussion forums, Collaborative spaces, Media sharing services, 'Microblogging' applications, and online gaming environments. Examples include Twitter, Facebook, Windows Live Messenger, YouTube, Flickr, Xbox Live, Blogger, Tumblr, and comment streams on public websites such as newspaper sites.

any of the principles of this policy also apply to other types of online presence such as virtual worlds.

All members of staff 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, GDPR guidelines, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, UK libel and defamation laws and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the Trust's Equalities, Child Protection and ICT Acceptable Use Policies.

Within this policy there is a distinction between use of school-sanctioned social media for professional educational purposes, and personal use of social media

3.0 USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA SITES BY EMPLOYEES IN A PERSONAL CAPACITY

It is possible that a high proportion of staff will have their own social networking accounts. It is important that they protect their professional reputation, and that of the school, by ensuring that they use their personal sites in an appropriate manner. Staff will be advised as follows:

- That they familiarise themselves with social network sites' privacy settings in order to ensure that information is not automatically shared with a wider audience than intended. It is recommended that, as a minimum, all privacy settings are set to 'friends only', irrespective of use/purpose
- That they do not conduct or portray themselves, or allow friends to portray them, in a manner which may:
 - Bring the school into disrepute;
 - Lead to valid parental complaints;
 - Be deemed as derogatory towards the school and/or its employees;
 - Be deemed as derogatory towards pupils, parents/carers or governors
 - Bring into question their appropriateness to work with children
 - Contravene current National Teacher Standards
- That they do not form online friendships or enter into communication with parents/carers that could lead to professional relationships being compromised
- That they do not form online friendships or enter into online communication with pupils as this could lead to professional relationships being compromised, and/or safeguarding allegations being raised
- That they should not post pictures of (without the CEOs/Headteacher's consent) or negative comments about school events
- That if their use of social media/networking sites contravenes this policy, they may be subject to disciplinary action