

## Social Media Policy

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| Name of Policy       | SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY   |
| Policy Level         | Trust   |
| Date of issue        | February 2019   |
| Author:              | Trust Board   |
| Date of Next Review: | October 2020  |
| Signature            |  |
| Date of Signature:   | 8 <sup>th</sup> February 2019   |

[www.learningleading.org](http://www.learningleading.org)

01788 222060 | [info@learningleading.org](mailto:info@learningleading.org) | @LearnLeadTrust

Address and Registered Office: 1 Bailey Road, Rugby CV23 0PD

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This policy applies to all Trust staff regardless of their employment status. It is to be read in conjunction with the Trust's Electronic Communications Policy. This policy does not form part of the terms and conditions of employee's employment with the Trust and is not intended to have contractual effect. It does however set out the Trust's current practices and required standards of conduct and all staff are required to comply with its contents. Breach of the provisions of this policy will be treated as a disciplinary offence which may result in disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

This Policy may be amended from time to time and staff will be notified of any changes no later than one month from the date those changes are intended to take effect.

### **Schedule of Responsibilities**

The CEO of Learning Today Leading Tomorrow Trust (LT2) takes overall responsibility for the implementation of policies and procedures and to provide reports as appropriate to Trustees in relation to this policy.

Headteachers of LT2 schools and their Senior Leadership Teams will take active steps to promote good practice under this policy and review and monitor the management and implementation of this policy and practice in their School. They will identify training needs, ensuring competence in those staff who are responsible for and involved in the operation of this policy and associated guidance.

Teachers and other supervisory roles will, where required, conduct formal meetings, undertake relevant training in relation to this policy and ensure effective and competent operation of this policy.

All employees are required to cooperate fully and positively with the requirements of this Policy and to undertake any training recommended by their line manager.

The Trust's HR Advisers are responsible for providing advice and guidance under this policy and reviewing and updating the policy as required; ensuring continuing compliance in line with any developments in employment legislation, good employment practice and other LT2 policies. The Trust's HR Advisers may be requested to provide data for regular Trust Board HR reports where appropriate, providing confidential reports as required by the CEO and LT2 Audit committee or Trust Board on individual cases.

The following persons will generally be responsible for managing employees under this policy:

The Trust Headteacher (for Trust based teaching and educational or non-educational support staff) and the Chief Executive Officer (for Trust Headteachers and centrally appointed teaching and support staff) (the "Line Manager").

### **Purpose of this Policy**

The Trust recognises that the internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information on particular topics using a wide variety of social media, such as but not exclusively, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, blogs and wikis. However, staff use of social media can pose risks to the Trust's confidential and proprietary information, its reputation and it can jeopardise our compliance with our legal obligations.

To minimise these risks, avoid loss of productivity and to ensure that our IT resources and communications systems are used only for appropriate work related purposes, all Trust staff are required to comply with the provisions in this policy.

### **Who is covered by this policy?**

This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades within the Trust, including senior managers, officers, governors, employees, consultants, contractors, trainees, homeworkers, part-time and fixed-term employees, casual and agency staff and volunteers (collectively referred to as **Staff** in this policy).

Third parties who have access to our electronic communication systems and equipment are also required to comply with this policy.

### **Scope and Purpose of this Policy**

This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Wikipedia, all other social networking sites, and all other internet postings, including blogs.

***It applies to the use of social media for both work and personal purposes, whether during work hours or otherwise. The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using our IT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to members of staff.***

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Disciplinary action may be taken regardless of whether the breach is committed during working hours, and regardless of whether the Trust's equipment or facilities are used for the purpose of committing the breach. Any member of staff suspected of committing a breach of this policy will be required to co-operate with our investigation, which may involve handing over relevant passwords and login details.

Staff may be required to remove internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.

## **Compliance with related policies and agreements**

Social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of our other policies. If an internet post would breach any of our policies in another forum, it will also breach them in an online forum. For example, employees are prohibited from using social media to:

- breach our Electronic information and communications systems policy
- breach our obligations with respect to the rules of relevant regulatory bodies
- breach any obligations they may have relating to confidentiality
- breach our Disciplinary Rules
- defame or disparage the Trust, its Staff, its pupils or parents, its affiliates, partners, suppliers, vendors or other stakeholders
- harass or bully other Staff in any way or breach our Anti-harassment and bullying policy
- unlawfully discriminate against other Staff or third parties or breach our Equal opportunities policy
- breach our Data protection policy (for example, never disclose personal information about a colleague or pupil online)
- breach any other laws or ethical standards (for example, never use social media in a false or misleading way, such as by claiming to be someone other than yourself or by making misleading statements)

Staff should never provide references for other individuals on social or professional networking sites, as such references, positive and negative, can be attributed to the Trust and create legal liability for both the author of the reference and the organisation.

Staff who breach any of the above policies will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

## **Personal use of social media**

Personal use of social media is never permitted during working time or by means of our computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems.

## **Monitoring**

The contents of our IT resources and communications systems are the Trust's property. Therefore, staff should have no expectation of privacy in any message, files, data, document, facsimile, telephone conversation, social media post conversation or message, or any other kind of information or communications transmitted to, received or printed from, or stored or recorded on our electronic information and communications systems.

The Trust reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, staff activities using our IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to social media postings and activities, to ensure that our rules are being complied with and for legitimate business purposes and you consent to such monitoring by your acknowledgement of this policy and your use of such resources and systems. This might include, without limitation, the monitoring, interception, accessing, recording, disclosing, inspecting, reviewing, retrieving and printing of transactions, messages, communications, postings, log-ins, recordings and other uses of the systems as well as keystroke capturing and other network monitoring technologies.

The Trust may store copies of such data or communications for a period of time after they are created, and may delete such copies from time to time without notice.

All Staff are advised not to use our IT resources and communications systems for any matter that he or she wishes to be kept private or confidential from the Trust.

### **Educational or Extra Curricular Use of Social Media**

If your duties require you to speak on behalf of the Trust in a social media environment, you must still seek express, written approval for such communication from the Headteacher or Chief Executive Officer in advance who may require you to undergo training before you do so and impose certain requirements and restrictions with regard to your activities.

Likewise, if you are contacted for comments about the Trust for publication anywhere, including in any social media outlet, you must direct the inquiry to the Headteacher or Chief Executive Officer and must not respond without advanced written approval.

### **Recruitment**

The Trust may use internet searches to perform pre-employment checks on candidates in the course of recruitment. Where the Trust does this, it will act in accordance with its data protection and equal opportunities obligations.

### **Responsible use of social media**

The following sections of the policy provide staff with common-sense guidelines and recommendations for using social media responsibly and safely.

### **Photographs for use of Social Media:**

Any photos for social media posts may only be taken using school cameras/devices or devices that have been approved in advance by the Headteacher or CEO. Where any device is used that does not belong to the Trust all photos must be deleted immediately from the device, once the photos have been uploaded to a device belonging to the School/Trust.

### **Staff Protocol for use of Social Media:**

Where any post is going to be made on the Trust/School's own social media the following steps must be taken:

1. Ensure that permission from the child's parent has been sought before information is used on social media (via [Parent/Social Media Agreement]).
2. Ensure that there is no identifying information relating to a child/children in the post - for example any certificates in photos are blank/without names or the child's name cannot be seen on the piece of work.
3. The post must be a positive and relevant post relating to the children, the good work of staff, the Trust or any achievements.
4. Social Media can also be used to issue updates or reminders to parents/guardians and a designated person will have overall responsibility for this. Should you wish for any reminders to be issued you should contact the designated person to ensure that any post can be issued.
5. The proposed post must be presented to the designated person for confirmation that the post can 'go live' before it is posted on any social media site.
6. The designated person will post the information, but all staff have responsibility to ensure that the Social Media Policy has been adhered to.

### **Protecting our business reputation:**

Staff must not post disparaging or defamatory statements about:

- the Trust or its schools;
- current, past or prospective Staff as defined in this policy
- current, past or prospective pupils

- parents, carers or families of (iii)
- the Trust's suppliers and services providers; and
- other affiliates and stakeholders.

Staff should also avoid social media communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage the Trust's reputation, even indirectly.

If Staff are using social media they should make it clear in any social media postings that they are speaking on their own behalf. Staff should write in the first person and use a personal rather than Trust e-mail address when communicating via social media.

Staff are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media. Staff should remember that what they publish might be available to be read by the masses (including the Trust itself, future employers and social acquaintances) for a long time. Staff should keep this in mind before they post content.

If Staff disclose whether directly or indirectly their affiliation to the Trust as a member of Staff whether past, current or prospective, they must also state that their views do not represent those of the Trust.

Staff must ensure that their profile and any content posted are consistent with the professional image they are required to present to colleagues, pupils and parents.

Staff must avoid posting comments about confidential or sensitive School related topics. Even if Staff make it clear that their views on such topics do not represent those of the Trust, such comments could still damage the Trust's reputation and incur potential liability.

If a member of Staff is uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, he or she should refrain from making the communication until he or she has discussed it with his Line Manager or Head of Department.

If a member of Staff sees content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on the Trust, its Staff, pupils, parents, service providers or stakeholders, he or she is required to report this in the first instance to the Headteacher without unreasonable delay. All staff are responsible for protecting the Trust's reputation.

#### **Respecting intellectual property and confidential information:**

Staff should not do anything to jeopardise Trust confidential information and intellectual property through the use of social media.

In addition, Staff should avoid misappropriating or infringing the intellectual property of other Trust's, organisations, companies and individuals, which can create liability for the Trust, as well as the individual author.

Staff must not use the Trust's logos, brand names, slogans or other trademarks, or post any of our confidential or proprietary information without express prior written permission from the Headteacher.

To protect yourself and the Trust against liability for copyright infringement, where appropriate, reference sources of particular information you post or upload and cite them accurately. If you have any questions about whether a particular post or upload might violate anyone's copyright or trademark, ask the Headteacher in the first instance before making the communication.

### **Respecting colleagues, pupils, parents, clients, service providers and stakeholders**

Staff must not post anything that their colleagues, the Trust's past, current or prospective pupils, parents, service providers or stakeholders may find offensive, including discriminatory comments, insults or obscenity.

Staff must not post anything related to colleagues, the Trust's past, current or prospective pupils, parents, service providers or stakeholders without their advanced written permission.